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# THE CREDENTIALS OF THE CROSS

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# THE CREDENTIALS OF THE CROSS

# THE CREDENTIALS OF THE CROSS

BY

NORTHCOTE DECK, M.B., CH.M.

SOUTH SEA EVANGELICAL MISSION, AOLA
BRITISH SOLOMON ISLANDS

WITH FOREWORD BY

ALBERT A. HEAD

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# FOREWORD

TIME is never lost in the contemplation of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." A new vision and a new meaning may be vouchsafed to those who, like the disciples on that eventful day, "sat down and watched Him there"; making the Cross of Calvary another "burning bush" in this wilderness across which the path lies to the Home yonder: until the deep realities of St. Paul's testimony become, in measure, our experience—"I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

"The Credentials of the Cross" will help the reader to value and benefit by a careful and sympathetic perusal of the meditations of Dr. Northcote Deck upon this amazing event which affects the eternal interests of all mankind.

In his missionary labours amongst the needy and benighted souls around the region of the Solomon Islands, it would appear that the Lord

has made the natural beauties of sea and land to be a channel of new inspiration and of awakening desire for the ignorant and cruel tribes, that they may be brought from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. In this yearning and in this service, the Cross of Jesus has become clustered with fresh revelation and application of Gospel truth; and our brother now gives his personal testimony in the pages of this solemn but penetrating missive, that he who reads may learn and find that "the key to the heavenlies is still the Cross; the fount of knowledge is still the Scriptures; the title deeds to Heaven are still the wounded Hands."

I earnestly commend this volume to the attention of all who would know more of the preaching of the Cross as the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; and as a stimulating and encouraging message to those who are earnestly seeking the extension of the Kingdom of Christ amongst the unevangelised nations of the world.

ALBERT A. HEAD.

*If you are a stranger to the Delectable Mountains,*
*If you wish to enter and enjoy, here is a* KEY.
*It opens all the gates that bar you from God's*
*Presence. Its name is simple.*
*It is* FAITH.
*It has been used for centuries.*
*It has brought solace to countless saints.*
*It has never failed to unlock the hardest hearts.*
*Nor to ease the sorest trials. Nor to dissipate*
*the gravest doubts. But you must use it.*
*Else it is useless. You may gain a prospect of*
*the Promised Land, that will stir your senses.*
*But feelings are fugitive. They will fail you*
*when you cross the last dark river. Nothing abides,*
*or avails, till you have entered the Ranks of*
*the Redeemed. This you may do, without money and*
*without price. Except the price of your* HEART.
*May these pages show you what Love you are losing,*
*what Joy you are rejecting, if you limit or*
*reject the Dominion of the Lord's Christ, in your heart.*

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# THE LAW OF THE SOUL'S APPROACH TO GOD

# THE LAW OF THE SOUL'S APPROACH TO GOD

"THAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled. . . . That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you" (1 John i. 1, 3).

So opens the majestic message of John the Beloved. Consider the circumstances in which these words were written. He was an aged man now. His life had been lived through wars and rumours of wars. He had seen empires rise. Like shadows he had seen them pass away. A score of years before, he had witnessed God's righteous retribution on his nation, when the voices that had clamoured that Christ's blood should be upon their heads, those clamant voices, were stilled in death. He had watched heresies born, to flourish and decay as quickly as the men that gave them birth. Even now the love of the many had waxed cold, and evil seemed in the ascendant. And few remained of the disciples who had not sealed their testimony with their lives.

Yet this faithful, truthful witness, still, as always,

spoke in a voice of absolute certainty. Assuredly he knew Whom he had believed.

It is specially significant to us who live in these days of doubt and unbelief, that this witness knew not a creed but a Christ; he served not a sect but a Saviour; he believed not in a party but in a Person—a Person who, before He ascended, made a parting yet permanent appointment: "Ye shall be My witnesses" was the rank and office that He gave to His redeemed, as He sent them forth to the fight.

Yet to-day, in the view of many versed in the wisdom of this world, such simple Scriptural witnesses are superseded; and the spectacles of a professor are needed to discern the way of salvation for the world; the microscope of a scientist is needed to discover the Way of Life: with the result that, instead of witnesses who speak that they do know, in many cases we have speculators who know not what they speak. The former testify what they have seen; the latter, alas, not having seen, cannot testify! Whom are we to believe?—the vain imaginings of men, whose theories turn to dust almost sooner than their bones; or the word and witness of the undying majestic Christ, whose shadow upon the Cross has stretched across centuries and continents, bringing hope and peace to countless hearts, and healing to the nations? Thank God, we too can *know* Whom we have believed.

Now in these days, when the blood of Jesus is counted an unholy thing; when it is shunned on the one hand, and spurned on the other, the world seeks for other names and other gods whereby they may be saved from the cravings of God's implanted conscience. Yet it is wise to remember that the quest is

futile and foredoomed to failure. For it is God's unchanging pronouncement, that besides Jesus "there is *no other name* given under heaven whereby men must be saved." This is an eternal and everlasting fact, that is not at all to be altered by age or science or discovery of man.

Therefore it is not dogmatism but devotion, when we take our stand with our Divine Master. It is not obstinacy but obedience, when we take Him at His word, and believe Him without question, when in His infinite wisdom He reiterates that there is *no* other name. Who are we, His creatures, to dictate the laws of our Creator's kingdom? How should such presume to lay down the conditions necessary for Eternal Life?

We have, indeed, found Him true in all things wherein we as mortals can verify His word. He promises *peace* upon the condition of simple faith; and having fulfilled that condition, the peace of God does garrison our hearts. He promises *pardon* for the penitent; and yielding our wills to His, we have the assurance in our hearts that our sins are blotted out. He promises a *changed life* to all believers; and having believed, we find "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Finally, and most conclusive of all, He promises *power* for service, to those who will open their hearts' last chamber to His suppliant Spirit—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock,"—and He, when He is enthroned, so endues the Christian with power from on high, that such an one is evidently possessed with new and undreamed of possibilities; so that it is literally true that he is "changed into another man."

Here then is some reagent that so acts upon the soul, as to produce results which are visible and undeniable, and which can be predicted with absolute certainty. And as to-day no one would attempt to deny the reactions and properties of the elements as proved by the chemist—for such can be demonstrated to any candid inquirer—even so the properties, the possibilities, and the destiny of the soul, can be as surely tested and proved by that magical reagent, the blood of Christ. For applied to the human soul of whatever nationality or age or time, according to the principles and conditions laid down by God in His revealed Word, the blood of Christ will surely and invariably produce the same blessed results. There will be assurance of peace and pardon to the conscience of the believer; and there will be a changed life and power for service as evidence to the beholder.

The secret and the solution of the soul's effectual approach to God, and peace with God, lies in the literal fulfilment of these conditions. And in so far as these conditions are not complied with, just so far will there be faulty and imperfect results, to discourage the believer, and to discredit his Saviour.

Now, in a sense, in many of the sciences, men expect to understand before they will believe. Yet this is only very partially true. In vast realms of knowledge men have to believe without much prospect of ever really understanding. Why then is it so distasteful to the pride of man, that to know God, he must be content to believe before he can understand? For this is the stumbling-block which keeps many out of the kingdom.

Yet it is and must remain a fundamental axiom,

laid down by God, that in the soul's approach to God, we must be willing to believe first, in order that we may understand afterwards. We must be willing to take the step in the dark, in order that we may become children of light. Only in this order and in this appointed way will the Saviour reveal Himself, and come into vital union with the sinner.

To-day the oceans of the world are vibrating with wireless messages sent by ships and shores. To the unaided senses of man, they pass undetected, unrealised, undreamed of. And why? Because they cannot be discerned at all by the natural organs of man. His eye, his ear, his touch, were not created for that purpose. Such delicate waves can indeed only be discerned by special apparatus. And more: this special apparatus itself needs to be tuned and adjusted to interpret these messages with which the air is thrilling.

Surely, then, it is not reasonable to claim that the great unseen world cannot be felt, cannot be known, or does not exist, because our eyes do not see it, our ears cannot hear it! They were not designed to do so. Yet the unseen world is just as real, just as present, just as immanent; even though men, using the wrong senses, cannot detect or know it. It is there. God is there. God can be known.

But He Himself says that "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Yet, in His providence, there is in every man an apparatus latent, and unused in most cases, which was designed by God to detect these spiritual things. Men call it

conscience. But as there is a right and a wrong use of every instrument—and when wrongly used such an instrument cannot give results—even so man's conscience cannot interpret or detect our God and Maker unless it is rightly used. There are certain laws and conditions laid down, which must be complied with. They are revealed for us in the Word of God. When fulfilled the result is sure, sure as Jehovah's throne.

What then are these conditions at once so vital and so essential? Briefly they are these:

(1) There must be sincere sorrow for past sin.

(2) There must be a conscious yielding of the will to Christ's control. He must be accepted as Lord and Master.

(3) There must be a definite request for pardon, believing that He is able to forgive, who has paid our penalty on the Cross.

(4) There must be a conscious committal of the life into His safe keeping.

Now the assent to these conditions, the belief in them, must be not merely mental. That is not enough. That is not saving faith. There must needs be, on the part of each and every one, a definite personal act of appropriation, that includes the will as well as the mind. For there needs to be a belief not in Christianity, but in Christ; a revelation not of religion, but of the Redeemer. For no impersonal assent to Christ's claims will do. A vital living interview, each for himself, with the Saviour is needed—a personal contact with the King.

Then, after a longer or shorter interval, during which we must believe in spite of feelings that God

has heard, and that He has pardoned, there will follow a vision, such as John had when "a door was opened in heaven." And God's assurance of His answer will find and overflow the soul, and the joy of the Lord will become our strength. What means this miracle of grace, and how is it effected? This is one of the mysteries that passes knowledge, though the fact itself is so certain.

We do know that the Lamb of God is our Substitute. We are assured by God His Father, that He would never have suffered the shame and the cross of His dear Son had it been in vain; and that, being a Personage of so exalted a station, the Saviour through His death in their stead, *is* able to save unto the uttermost, all those that come unto God by Him.

But how can we, who are stained with sin, whose very righteousness is but as filthy rags, how can we appear whiter than the snow before the throne of God in heaven? This too is, and must remain, a mystery. Yet a feeble human simile may help us here.

In the photographer's dark room, the white flame of a lamp seen through ruby glass, yet appears red. In the passage of the ray of light through the red glass, the violet rays are absorbed, and the room is literally and truly flooded with a warm glow of ruby light. May it not be even so, that a sinner viewed through the scarlet flood of the life-blood of the Saviour is seen far whiter than the snow? All sin is absorbed; all blemishes are absent; all that defiles has been destroyed, in its passage through this heavenly colour screen. So that God's erring wayward children, as seen by the Father through the

all-sufficient magical spectrum of the Saviour's blood, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, shall be clad in white raiment. "And they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads." This is the destiny and distinction that is open to all.

Yet it is ominous that judgment in default has been pronounced upon each and upon all. "He that believeth not is condemned already." If you have not met the Saviour, you have missed Him. If you are not converted, you are condemned. Yet this doom may be diverted to the Saviour. In very truth, "He died that we might live."

"Behold, I set before you the way of *life*, and the way of *death*." On the one hand there is certain:

> "The morrow of the glory and the psalm,
> When He shall come;
> The morrow of the harping and the palm,
> The welcome Home."

And on the other hand just as surely:

"A certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation."

May God give you grace to choose His Christ.

# WHO GIVES A GUEST-CHAMBER?

## A STUDY IN INVESTMENT

# WHO GIVES A GUEST-CHAMBER?

## A STUDY IN INVESTMENT

THIS subject of investment has a never-ending interest to the human heart. For there are few minds that have no desire for more—more scope, more power, more wealth, more happiness. There are few hearts that are not ambitious; and rightly so, for ambition is God's gift to man's heart. Yet this same God-given faculty may be, and mostly is, misapplied; it is deformed, it is distorted. So that in place of procuring a crown, it produces a curse. How many men mistake their vocation in life! They dream of their El Dorados. They ransack the mountain ranges for gold. They toil on, year after year, in search of elusive treasure. They die still dreaming of the philosopher's stone—a touch-stone which is to cause fleeting happiness to abide; which will make pleasure to really please; which will make this present evil world to satisfy the soul. They live dreaming and hoping; they die despairing. For there is no such elixir of life. None save the Saviour's blood.

Countless, indeed, are the prodigals of to-day, who prefer the far country to the Father's presence. But do not think they are all clothed in rags. Perhaps

the most wretched of all are clad in soft raiment, while their hearts go bare. They fare sumptuously every day, while their souls are starved. One and all unite in mistrusting the very and only One who is trustworthy. For our sakes and theirs God gave His Son, even His dearly Beloved. How shall He not with Him freely give us all things?

Indeed He is waiting to do so. For His dear Son is waiting to pour into such lives a wealth of peace and joy undreamed of. Do not forget He is a King. He gives as a King. Oh, trust His outstretched hand, and take Him at His word. Then, indeed, you will find, as so many of His grateful followers have found, that in very truth "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

Yet how often He has been repulsed! How many times rejected and disbelieved! No wonder He could not restrain His cry to those men with whom He walked of old: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe," when they, like many to-day, were obsessed with the earthly, and were oblivious to the heavenly. And His cry was a cry not of anger, but of solicitude and of sorrow. It is a cry that has echoed through the ages; it sounds to-day;

> "It comes unto you, it comes unto me;
> Oh what, oh what shall the answer be?"

See then this same Lord Jesus, as He approaches both His capital of Jerusalem and His climax of Calvary. There the heavenly Heir of all things, who had not where to lay His head, met with a nameless disciple. In the inspired pages of God's Word—which is the only true and trustworthy investor's

guide—we hear of the offer that this disciple made, and of the reward he reaped; a reward that, in proportion to his gift, is perhaps the richest that is recorded.

We do not know where or how they had met before, nor when had been born that faith in the Saviour which caused this man to acknowledge Him as Master. Of these details the Word is silent. But we do know, as Christ knew, that there was a large upper room waiting. It must have been offered to the Lord before, because the room was furnished and ready.

About that waiting upper room there centres an intense and eternal interest. The first striking fact in connection with this guest-chamber is that *there they were to eat a feast*, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. What! some would exclaim, could there be a feast without leaven? (Now leaven is the type of sin.) Could the heart of man make merry, with the luxuries of daily living absent? And to many, no doubt, this will seem impossible; a contradiction in terms. For the pleasures of sin are proverbially attractive to the unregenerate heart; Stolen fruits seem sweetest (and indeed they are stolen if enjoyed in exclusion of the Giver of All). Yet to those who know, that phrase, "The Feast of Unleavened Bread," is pregnant with promise; for it bears witness to a tremendous truth —that the fullest feast, the supremest satisfaction, obtains in the heart where sin is absent, being put away by the precious blood. This has been proved and confirmed in the experience of countless lives, who having had the leaven purged, the sin cleansed, have found in Christ their All in All.

But wait! This joy of life is not to be so lightly won. As we ponder the sacred page, we meet this statement: "The day of unleavened bread . . . on which the Passover must be sacrificed." Note the word "must." Here is a Divine compulsion; it is imperative, inevitable, that word "must." For the Feast of Unleavened Bread would be impossible without the sacrifice of the Passover lamb. It is said, there is no crown but first a cross. Equally true is it, that there is no feast but first a sacrifice.

Here then is a spiritual law: that in the realm of the redeemed there can be no feast without a fight; no success without sacrifice. This may seem a hard saying. Yet do not depart, neither despair: "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Remember He is still the tender Shepherd. He has promised to "gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom." It is a blessed fact, that in spite of the sacrifice there may be, there should be, a song of triumph; the slaying of the Lamb is but the signal of victory. You too may be more than conqueror; it will still be through His blood, through His sacrifice, through your sacrifice.

And now the day of His departure was almost come; the great day of the feast. Yet the Lord's most privileged disciples were all preoccupied with pride of place. They were all oblivious to His coming pain and passion. Like so many others to-day, each sought his own, and not his Master's interests.

In startling contrast there now enters upon the sacred pages this nameless man, who had offered his home for the use of the homeless Stranger. His all

he had laid at His feet. Here at least in old Jerusalem He might find sanctuary from Scribes and Pharisees.

At first, perhaps, when the Master did not come, it seemed to this disciple that the Lord disdained the gift; or even, perhaps, that He had forgotten the giver. For though it was a large upper room, yet it was a small enough offering to yield to the Lord of life and glory. Assuredly, when he made the offer, the good-man knew not what he did. He was no prophet. He could never have foreseen what honour would come to him through that impulsive gift.

Yet follow the fortunes of that upper room. From His voluntary exile outside the walls at Bethany, the Son of God entered in the evening, almost for the last time in His earthly life, the city of His peculiar people. He should have come as King. But there were no plaudits. There was no procession with regal pomp. Unheralded and unobserved, He made His way to the good-man's home, and there first set the seal of His approval on that humble house.

There in the evening's quiet, He sat at meat with His twelve disciples. It must have been a secluded quarter of the town; for it seems to have been there, in after days, the disciples met in retirement, with doors shut for fear of the Jews. Yet Jerusalem around was thronged with multitudes, come from many a city far away. From villages and hamlets, from mountain-sides and fertile plains, the nation had forgathered for the feast. They might well have come to crown their King; instead, they welcomed Him with a Cross.

Yes, outside the streets were thronged. Inside was

gathered a pathetic company. The Son of God, the brightness of His Father's glory, was there with His following of fishermen. How the good-man's simple upper room was transfigured! It had become the banquet-chamber of the King of kings, where He took what rest remained to Him that last dark night.

It was in that room the strife of shame took place, which in after years must have raised such vain regrets in the minds of the disciples. There, with Kingly condescension, He of the shining garments took the rough towel and water, and girding Himself, He washed those unworthy feet.

From that room the traitor went out into the night. There took place that strangest, sweetest, most intimate repast, a feast within a feast; when the departing Christ swept away at one stroke all the elaborate ritual of the law, and, in its stead, bequeathed to the centuries to come the broken bread and out-poured wine, to point us to Himself and His return.

There too were spoken, as the evening hours slipped away, those words of love and counsel, whose depths have never yet been fathomed. That room became, indeed, the ante-chamber to the heavenly places for the disciples. For Him it was but the ante-chamber to His agony. For from its friendly portals, from its warmth and cheer and sanctuary, He passed out into the dark night, and the darker hours, that culminated in the glare of Golgotha.

After the nation's hate had crucified Him as its curse, the broken band of the disciples forgathered again in the upper room. How changed was it, and they! Disheartened and disillusioned, their King

crucified, His Kingdom crushed, no wonder the doors were shut. No wonder fear filled their hearts. Into such an atmosphere came the risen Christ, with His immortal message of peace.

To the upper room, after the forty days of waiting and fasting and suspense, there came the promised Paraclete, to empower the infant expectant Church for its pilgrimage through the age, to the consummation of His Coming. We do not know the ultimate fate of this feasting place, or the name, the life, or the death of its owner. But when we consider the evolution of that upper room, we are filled with wonder and praise: wonder at the change that came over its destinies; praise that He can still transfigure and transform gifts yielded in like manner to Himself.

Think once again of the Master's miracle. Beyond the usual Passover feast, the humble owner had no premonition of the purposes for which his chamber would be used. Yet being yielded to the Master was but the first act, that literally opened its humble door to glory ineffable. So that around it centre the most sacred memories of the Church through all the centuries. Such glory is the goal that is set before you, all you that are His. For should you ask what does the guest-chamber signify to-day and to you, at once there comes to mind the Master's challenge to the Christian: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear . . . and open . . . I will come in, and will sup with him, and he with Me." We know the assured result of such an interview; we have read of the burning hearts, the climax of the Emmaus walk.

And that such a state of heart is possible to-day,

many indeed can humbly testify. We have seen some of the world's most wonderful cathedrals, have trod with reverent steps where multitudes of men have bowed and worshipped; yet such resplendent shrines have nothing of the majesty and the munificence of knowing the Saviour, in the midst and in the heart. Compared with that Majestic Presence, the Burning Bush in the burning heart, all human temples pale and pall. For at His entrance, as always, the clouds disperse, the shadows flee away, before the coming and the shining of the Sun of Righteousness, who brings to the believer "a rapture and a glory and a calm, a life that is an everlasting psalm."

Now light breaks on the deeper meaning of that verse, "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." For this is indeed literally true when we are yielded to Him, and filled with His Spirit. There are no illusions about the old life. Our friends and relations assess us at our true value; they are so painfully aware of our limitations and weaknesses, our faults and failings. But when we step out in faith on the promises of God, and accept the empowering of His Spirit for sanctification and service, a new factor is introduced into our lives which nullifies all estimates, and upsets all calculations.

Then all things do literally become new. For as the Saviour accepted and consecrated and magnified the gift of the upper room, changing it from a humble dwelling-place into the banquet-chamber of the King of kings, so He can do with all other gifts, all hearts, all lives. He can make Jacob the Supplanter to become Israel the Prince with God. He can change Simon, cowering round the fire, into Peter who spoke

the word of God with boldness. And Saul the fanatic He changes into Paul the faithful witness. John the sleeper of Gethsemane becomes John the seer of Patmos. While the gift of the lad with his few barley loaves and fishes is transformed to feed five thousand.

The new-found glories of the guest-chamber, then, yield us some faint glimpse of how He can multiply a gift. Such must be the greatest incentive to the wayfarer, to step out in faith, and trust Him to the full. Whoever you may be; however endowed with, or however devoid of, natural advantages—there is almost no limit for your life, if you are wholly yielded to, and wholly possessed by, His Spirit. For in such a life, so yielded, He will develop talents that are now diverted from Himself, and He will discover fresh talents, latent and undreamed of, and cause them to redound to His glory and to your joy.

One last fact is an encouragement to the faint-hearted. The chamber was "ready," as far as the good-man was concerned; yet two most trusted disciples were sent to "prepare" it further for the Master. We too, however "ready" we may be, need to be prepared for our Master and His coming in glory. He would send His gracious Spirit to make such preparation. For we cannot prepare our hearts. We can but empty; He must fill and empower. "Come not to find, but to *make* this troubled heart a dwelling worthy of Thee as Thou art." That is the Divine order and ordinance. The one pre-requisite is an empty, hungry heart. With such He can work His wonders.

This prospect then is open to the poorest disciple. For it is not true that any are too poor to make such

an investment. None are poorer than was this nameless man. All kings' sons have as great a capital to invest, at the same heavenly interest. For though we may not all be house-holders, yet at least we are all *heart*-holders. Houses the Master has in plenty; "many mansions" He calls them. But hearts are different. Why, hearts He died for. Hearts He desires. He made them, He alone knows how to guard and guide them. *My son, give Me thy heart.*

# THE TWO MEMORIALS

# THE TWO MEMORIALS

THERE is a *traveller* on the road. He moves but slowly. His steps falter, and flag. He watches eagerly for each milestone. In the darkness his fingers trace out the name he looks for. Each milestone points him onward, and forward. In the distance he sees the glow of light, that tells of Life. At length he arrives. Yet passes on, and through, and out, into the darkness beyond. For he is bound farther, much farther. And now the milestones point both ways; back to the place he has passed; on to the place to be revealed by the morning light. Backward then he looks, and forward, as he toils through the long darkness. But at length the dawn comes, to end in perfect day, and to find him at the place "where he would be."

The milestones are passed. They have gone out of his sight, yet long they live in his mind. They have fulfilled the purpose for which they were designed. They have brought peace to the pilgrim. They have strengthened the trust of the traveller. And as he looked backward to the place he had passed, and forward with expectant eyes to the goal of glory, they were a calm assurance to the stranger

that the night that was so long would vanish before the rising of the Sun, and end in perfect day. They were, in fact, the comfort of the Comforter.

*Herein lies an allegory.* With the expulsion from Eden, the first man Adam became a *traveller.* The founder and father of the race became a pilgrim and a stranger. Through the simple sacrifices ordained by his Maker, he was pointed forward to a Saviour; and constrained to look for a better city, that is, an heavenly. This expectation and this quest he bequeathed to his descendants, as the fair dawn of Eden merged into the dim and shadowy light and sight of God, of the early ages.

From it the long dark slope of the world stretched before our ancestors the ancients; stretched forward to Calvary. Yet God ordained that on that slope were milestones and fingerposts, that most surely pointed to the "green hill far away," where should be crucified the Christ to come.

The light was clearer under Moses. Now was instituted *the first of the two memorials*, the Passover Feast. Now the yearly milestone could be plainly seen, pointing the pilgrim, from the lamb of the Passover, forward to the *Lamb of God.* Long centuries elapsed, and still He did not come. Yet through them all the patriarchs and prophets worshipped, and watched, and awaited His approach, as they sought diligently "what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand, the sufferings of Christ."

Then darkness supervened. The Jewish nation travelled the dreary road of years, through fighting

and famine, apostasy and affliction, to the climax of captivity. They make a spectacle sublime, yet infinitely pathetic, as, with the tenacity of despair, they clung blindly to the ordinance of Jehovah, amid the jibes and jeers of idolaters, long after His glory was departed.

Picture them as year by year the nation reached their milestone of hope, the Passover Feast. As year by year they gathered to remind themselves of the promise it portended, and year by year they awaited the arrival of the imminent Messiah. It was this memorial, this Passover Feast, that kept hope alive in their hearts. Yet, all unrealised and unrecognised, the Great Day of the greatest feast drew near, when the fulfilment by Christ of all their prophecies and promises was possible.

Yet the day so long foretold, so ardently expected, towards which thousands of eager eyes for generations past had gazed expectantly, that day came upon them as a thief in the night. So that, after centuries of celebrations by the devout and devoted of Israel, the nation neared unconsciously, not its climax, but its direst calamity.

Once again they had forgathered in the city of their forefathers. The crowded capital was filled with guests and gaieties. But long ago, the letter of the law that killeth had chilled their hearts and blinded their minds. For upon that day when, if ever, the nation needed a vision of their Messiah, meek, and lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon that day the veil remained un-taken away; remained upon their hearts. So this most tragical fact became true: the Lord Jesus had come to fulfil the very

feast that His ancient people were met to celebrate. Yet coming unto His own, His own received Him not. Instead, the very day and hour they were eating the Passover Feast in His honour, He Himself was hanging on Calvary, crucified by their hands. Hence though the fair dawn of Eden was followed by steadily increasing light for the world, it was doomed to culminate only in the glare of Golgotha.

*Thus ended the first memorial.* And though it ceased in eclipse at Calvary, yet it had fulfilled its purpose; it had strengthened the trust of the traveller; it had brought hope to countless hearts; it had pointed multitudes forward to the Messiah.

But though the paschal lamb, the first memorial, was fulfilled in Christ's death, and was thereby abolished, the night before it was fulfilled *the second memorial, the Lord's Supper*, was instituted by the Saviour. Not for one day would He leave them without a harbinger of hope. The paschal lamb had been the comfort of the pilgrim Jews, as it pointed to and promised the dying Lamb of God. The new memorial was to point His followers back to the Crucified who bore our sins; and forward to the coming victorious Christ who had promised to return.

The inception of this simple feast was tragic in the extreme. The account of the evening when He bequeathed this most intimate remembrance of Himself to His multitudes of followers yet unborn, the account of that eventful evening, opens with this pregnant sentence: "Now . . . when Jesus knew that His hour was come . . . having loved His

own which were in the world, He loved them unto the uttermost" (marg.). This gracious sentence is to prepare us for the recital of shame that follows, when "there was also a strife among them." It forms a challenge to the most unfaithful and discouraged believer to trust His love, for it is an assurance that that love was proof against even such selfishness and pride as possessed His disciples in this His supreme hour of need. It is written for our encouragement, who have like human hearts. The opening statement is, in fact, a warning to us not to think His love can be affected by our ingratitude.

Then follows the sublime narrative of Christ's condescension, as He washed their unworthy feet. The time was short. His hour was upon Him. There was much to say, and they were out of touch. Nothing else would shame and sober them like this. So He stooped to conquer, "knowing that . . . He was come from God, and went to God." For knowing He was Divine, He "began to wash the disciples' feet."

And now drew near the great and tragical event, by which He bought our pardon and our entrance into heaven. In a transaction of such vast importance, it is usual for both the contracting parties to possess evidence that will be a clear proof to all of what has occurred. *He* bears *His* evidence in His wounded hands and feet. He has ordained that we too shall have a like clear reminder, to assure and reassure doubting hearts.

So with His gracious words: *This do in remembrance of Me*, He established *the second memorial*, when He instituted the simple Supper that bears His Name. Its function and purpose is twofold.

*Firstly*, it is ever to remind the changeful human heart, that only His dying has delivered man; that His blood is the only solvent for sin; that nowhere but on the Cross may the faith of man depend. Thus the very partaking of the Lord's Supper is a tacit admission and testimony that His blood is the only price for sin. And indeed we need this constant corrective, for the heart of man is always seeking to establish its own self-righteousness, and always desiring to dispense with the Saviour.

But for those who seek to abide in Him, and to be conformed to His image, for those who find their greatest joy in His presence, there is a significant and encouraging sentence in Luke's Gospel. There we read: *He was known of them in the breaking of bread.* In His appearance to the disciples in the upper room, it is recorded, "He . . . did eat before them." By the Sea of Galilee He invited them, "Come and break your fast." These doings were not accidental. There is an eternal meaning in the Saviour's acts. He would emphasise the value of "feasting" with Him. For such He would make the "breaking of bread." Thus there are hidden depths that the soul will only discover while silent before Him, when obeying His command, "This do in remembrance of Me." It is clear from Acts ii. 42 what the apostolic practice was. For there we read, "They continued *steadfastly* in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, *and in breaking of bread*, and in prayers." He still waits to make Himself known in the "breaking of bread"; let us not then neglect His ordinance, but instead, "let us draw near in full assurance of faith."

Thus we see that this second memorial points the sinner backward to Calvary, and the Saviour's dying. But,

*Secondly*, it was ordained also to point us forward to our *heritage of hope, His coming again.* Now this "coming again" is subject to much controversy in the Church, nor is there space here for even an outline of the various views. But there are some facts which should be prayerfully pondered by every obedient believer, before postponing His coming till after the Millennium, and thereby relinquishing that hope which Christ designed for us, and which has meant so much to the Church in the past. For there is no doubt that believing that a thousand years must elapse before Christ can return, as some do, shatters the hope that once animated the Church, and causes it to be unmentioned, ignored, and almost forgotten.

Hear then the testimony of three witnesses:

*First*, the Saviour Himself, speaking of the Father's house of many mansions, says: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place, *I will come again*, and receive you unto Myself." This refers not to death, nor to the coming of the Holy Spirit, but to Christ's coming in person to take us to the place He is preparing for us.

*Second*, two men in white, the Saviour's appointed witnesses: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, *shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.*"

*Third*, when, after more than fifty years in glory, *Christ* breaks the silence and speaks once more in the Revelation through His servant John, this latest

message from the throne of God begins: "*Behold, He cometh with clouds*"; and closes with the words, *Surely I come quickly.*

What means this *coming* which is thus so clearly emphasised, and which runs like a continual challenge and warning throughout the entire New Testament, so that it is referred to more often than almost any other doctrine? It is the *premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ*, into the air for His saints (1 Thess. iv. 17). It was this which was believed in without exception by the Apostles and the early Church. That this is so is admitted by all. For none can deny that for the first three centuries there was only one interpretation given to the great body of teaching uttered by Christ, and by the Holy Spirit through the Apostles, on this subject. With united gaze, the Apostles, the disciples, and the entire Church were then "looking for that blessed *hope*, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. ii. 13). Those were the days when the Church went forward conquering and to conquer.

When, however, the Church abandoned her pilgrim call and became wedded to the world, under Constantine in the third century, this "blessed hope" of the future was eclipsed by the splendours of the present. "Thus when the Church became a harlot, she ceased to be a bride who goes forth to meet the bridegroom"; for then, in place of being pilgrims and strangers, according to the Holy Spirit (1 Pet. ii. 11), which is the only position of safety, Christians found *here* a continuing city, and became immersed in the world. Thus reversing God's appointed order,

the Church "plunged into the dark ages, until awakened by the great reformers of the sixteenth century, who again began to proclaim the blessed hope of the coming of Christ." [1]

Now in all matters of faith and doctrine, we are rightly at the greatest pains to get back to bedrock, and to discover what the Holy Spirit has revealed through the Apostles; for then we know that we have recourse to a "more sure word of prophecy," the Word of God.

Yet in this matter of the Lord's return we *know* what the Apostles and fathers thought and taught. We *know* that they believed in the possibility of Christ's instant return. We know that this was the hope that sustained them through persecutions and distresses, that inspired them to retain their holy calling, and to maintain their separation from the world. We know, in brief, that this doctrine was part of "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and that it was believed in universally by the Apostles and the early Church. To the devout believer that should be enough; for we cannot believe that the Holy Spirit, who inspired the writing of the Scriptures, would have allowed a mistaken hope to be thus set forth in the Word of God and to be preached by the Apostles.

The practical result on the hearts and lives of those who thus looked for His appearing is equally certain. Expecting Him had precisely the effect that the Lord intended. So far from cutting the nerve of Christian

[1] P. 36, *Jesus is Coming*, by W. E. Blackstone, the most concise and convincing work on the subject (F. H. Revell. Price, 2s. 6d.).

effort, as is so often alleged, it had precisely the opposite effect. *It urged them to greater zeal because "the time is short."*

The effect of such watching, which gives us an indication of the reason for Christ's setting it before His followers as a hope, is beautifully illustrated from the home life of the late A. J. Gordon of Boston.

He writes: "Having gone into the country with my children for a few weeks' vacation, . . . almost upon my arrival I was summoned back to the city. In the disappointment of the children, I said to them: 'Children, I am going to the city to-day; but I shall soon be back again. I may come to-morrow, or the next day, or the day after, or possibly not till the end of the week; but you may expect me any time.' It so happened that I was detained till the Saturday. But when I returned, I learned that in their eagerness to welcome me back, the children, contrary to their natural instincts, had insisted on having their faces washed every day, and upon having on their clean clothes, and going down to meet me at train time." Thus the natural and inevitable effect of watching was: clean bodies, clean garments, and expectant hearts.

Even so, I have known many saints of God, who, in labours abundant, as they burned out for God, found their greatest inspiration and incentive in the happy expectation of the Lord's immediate return. Day by day, and year by year, joyfully they watched for Him; and yet, He has not come for them; instead, they have gone to Him. Yet the practical effect on their lives, of watching for Him, was that, through the discouragements, through the burden and heat of

the day, this hope was ever in their minds, cheering, comforting, and inciting to further efforts and holier living.

A similar "hope" preached in the mission field leads always to similar results among native converts. There is nothing that seems to have such an effect in inciting to zeal and self-sacrifice. And the fact that the majority of missionaries in foreign service, as well as the most prominent evangelists in the home lands, cherish this hope, is proof that it does *not* discourage missionary or evangelistic effort.

This blessed hope, then, I would earnestly beseech you to study prayerfully; not in the light of men's theories of what they conceive ought to come about, but in the light of the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise. And I would humbly commend this doctrine to you as a most precious belief, and as the greatest incentive to zeal and self-sacrifice, to holy living and joy in the Holy Ghost.

And such I believe is the Saviour's wish. For He ordained His simple Supper, to direct our gaze back to Calvary, but also to direct it *onward to victory, and the glory that is to be revealed at His return.* "*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this wine, ye do shew forth the Lord's death* TILL HE COME."

Thus it is His most urgent desire that the two watchwords of His redeemed followers should be *His dying on Calvary,* and *His coming in the clouds.* Are these really the watchwords of your life? Does your present view of the Lord's coming cause you to look and long for it? Does it make you often think about His near return? If it does not, it is conclusive evidence that there is something wrong with your

present way of looking at the question. Do you know that there is a special reward promised for those that watch for His return? "Henceforth there is laid up . . . a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give . . . at that day . . . unto all them . . . *that love His appearing*" (2 Tim. iv. 8). Are you qualifying for that crown by loving His appearing?

If you belong to Him, you too are a pilgrim, a stranger, a traveller. He has ordained milestones for your guidance and encouragement. Such He designed His *Supper* to be. Every time you partake of that sacred feast it should melt your heart and point you back to Calvary and His dying there for you; but at the same time it should cheer your heart and point you onward to the clouds and His coming again, and so become your greatest solace through this "little while."

"*Wherefore comfort one another with these words*" (1 Thess. iv. 18).

*May He, through His Word, and the direction of His Holy Spirit, reveal to you the true perspective of His plan of the ages, and grant you a like blessed hope and crown!*

# TWO INFALLIBLE PROOFS

# TWO INFALLIBLE PROOFS

TO-MORROW Christ must die. For to-morrow was the birthday of all believers when the Son of God would gain a new name. He was to add to the galaxy of illustrious titles that were His, one more lustrous than all. A name simple enough, yet one that would be at once the most costly to the Creator and the most priceless to the creature. For by to-morrow's black shame He would pay for Eternity's bright name; a name that was to become the sweetest note on mortal tongue. "His name . . . Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

To-morrow He must die. Aye, far more than that. To-morrow He must be dowered in His death with the sins of countless generations; so that He might link up the legions of the lost to the brightness of His Father's glory.

But to-night was His own. He would spend it with His own. "For it was a night much to be remembered."

See Him then in the guest-chamber. That upper room contained persons of destinies and distinction more diverse than can be imagined. There was the Saviour, who next day should suffer of His own free will, bound homeward and heavenward. There was

the betrayer, who would die by his own hands, that he might go to his own place. Men, too, were there unlearned and ignorant, who should be missionaries, then martyrs, and seal their testimonies with their lives. There were men who doubted, and men who loved; there were self-seekers who were to become soul-winners.

And the night? It was the night of the feast. For Him the night of the farewell. Many things He was to tell them, that would afterwards become His richest revelations to the world. Many, too, were held back; for, "ye cannot bear them now."

But around the table of that fateful feast, the Lord Jesus laid upon His followers two injunctions: the last codicil, as it were, of that new will and testament which was to be signed, sealed, and delivered, in His own most precious and worthy blood.

These two new commandments were simple, yet unutterably profound. They went to the heart of things, as indeed they dealt of the heart; and in the new era ushered in by His triumphant death they were to be the two hall-marks, that should distinguish and denote His followers; they were to be the two watchwords, with which His redeemed should go forth, conquering and to conquer; the two tokens that should convince and convert, wherever they were exhibited. And to-day, after two thousand years, these commands come to us as fresh, as vivid, as impossible, as when that night they fell from the lips of the soon-to-die Saviour. As impossible, I mean, to the natural man, as they must have seemed that evening to the dazed disciples.

What then were these new signs, which were to be

preached everywhere with signs following? For the dying wishes of those we love have a sacred and binding significance to us their executors. Hear then His gracious parting words.

(1) "*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another.* By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples."

This is the golden key to Christian conduct. It is able to unlock the hardest hearts. For how love beats down all barriers, dissolves all differences, and rights all wrongs! Truly He shows Himself as the great Physician, when out of the treasure of His heart this mighty Alchemist prescribes love in the heart for all enemies. Yet how visionary! How vain of attainment! For were not these words spoken as the sequel to an unseemly contest in that sacred upper room, Who should be the greatest? "Love one another!" How impossible! Yet for a time it became so possible, indeed so usual, that the very comment of the persecutors of the early Christians was, "How these Christians love one another!"

So with the same human hearts, the same loving Lord and Master, the same supreme Holy Ghost waiting to endue us with power from on high, this love for others to-day is not impossible but imperative, if we are to realise a tithe of His plans and purposes for our lives.

For an embittered heart means a dimmed vision, a powerless ministry. There is a Divine order for such disease. "First be reconciled . . . then come and offer thy gift," thy heart, thy talents. This is a prerequisite for service. Thus the strife that would have embittered will embalm; and in place of driving us

to despair, will reveal to us the solace of His side. But first we shall have to count all things but dross; that will not be easy. We shall be near to dying daily; that will not be fashionable. Yet we shall be in good company; "for all the time, did we only see, we walk in the King's own company."

It is quite certainly God's will then that we should love even our enemies; it is not effeminate, but Divine to do so. But how to love them? His immortal word, as always, supplies the answer: "Love your enemies; pray for them that despitefully use you." So simple, so sure, so profound! For prayer, like a two-edged sword, cuts both ways. It blesses him who prays as well as him he prays for.

And a true believer will not pray long for his enemies before he will long to pray for them. Where the treasure is, there will the heart be; and laying up prayer for an enemy, means that soon the heart will be with him too. This is not theory but fact, not fancy but sober truth; it is a way to whose efficacy one can humbly testify. Pray for your enemies; and then, believing God has heard your prayer and changed your heart and his, it is no hypocrisy to treat him as your friend. So shall the fragrance of your heart pervade your life, and be a token of your love to God and man.

(2) "*Let not your heart be troubled.*" This untroubled heart is not optional, but imperative; not a human choice, but a King's command. Indeed, it is no new thing that a king should forbid a troubled heart; for such is bound to betray itself in a troubled face. This, under pain of death, was expressly

forbidden by the ancient monarchs of the East. So that Nehemiah, appearing in his sovereign's service of a sad countenance, upon its being noticed by his lord, was sore afraid. For with his fellow-servants he "had not been aforetime sad in the king's presence." Shall we, whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high, render to our Divine Deliverer a service less perfect? Shall we be heavy when our hearts should burn? His was the face marred more than any man's, when He bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows. It was that our faces might reflect His present joy.

Truly the untroubled heart is a benison that belongs to you who read. It is yours. Your heritage by right and reason of His agony in the garden, of His broken body, His bowed head, His streaming side. Perhaps you do not possess it. It is yours for the asking, if you are His.

How then is this untroubled heart to be come at? Look at it this way. The shocks from the roughness of the road, that shake and jar one's very being in a cart, may pass unnoticed in a carriage. Wherein is the difference, but in the springs interposed between the wheels and the body. For the function of these springs is to absorb all shocks. They are designed for that purpose. Precisely so, I believe, the Holy Spirit is designated to make a similar provision for the soul. Through His gracious office and operation these majestic words may become true for each believer: "Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care, not a blast of hurry, touch the spirit there."

If the Comforter is allowed His rightful ministry, if He has His way, we walk on air, we are borne on

eagles' wings, we are stayed upon Jehovah. *This then is the gospel of heart's ease.*

It is the Church's shame, it is the Saviour's sorrow, that many of us are proceeding to the marriage of the Lamb in carts, when the King, His Father, has provided carriages; and kings' sons being out of place in carts, we excite the pity of some, the jeers of others. We are indeed a spectacle to men and angels. Brethren, these things need not be; they should not be, or we shame His precious Name. Truly, when He says "Let not your *heart* be troubled," He means it. For observe, our lives must and will be troubled ("many are the afflictions of the righteous"). Even as the road must of necessity be rough, being travelled by so great a traffic of humanity, many of whom have no regard for God; yet the jolts, the ruts, the shocks, that trouble our lives, need never reach our hearts, if the Holy Spirit is interposed. They need never reach the realm of the soul's repose in God.

Emphasise one word, and the position is clear. Let not *your* heart be troubled. *His* heart carries the trouble. It is the gracious birthright He acquired the morning He arose from the dead. And well it was worth the winning! For when He prescribed these two graces for His followers, a heart full of love and empty of trouble, He thereby showed His infinite wisdom. He knew what was in man. He knows that there is something passing the love of money in most human hearts. There is a craving for peace. "The wicked are like a troubled sea when it cannot rest." They cannot be quiet. There is nothing the human heart so longs for as peace and satisfaction.

There is nothing that when exhibited in the Christian, will have such drawing, convincing power as a loving and untroubled heart. *It is your needed equipment for service and sanctification.*

But how may this birthright be attained? What is the secret of this transferred burden? It is, I believe, the secret of the indwelling fulness of the Holy Ghost, the Christian's credential, which is obtainable by simple faith. It may be yours for the asking.

The feast was over, the prelude to the Passion and the Cross. The little gathering broke up. After a last pathetic hymn, they went out into the cool of the night, over to Olivet. There the agony was begun that bought these gifts for you. "*Unto you therefore which believe, is the preciousness.*" Yet you must ask,

> "With meekness and humility and prayer;
> Then will He come: yet coming, even there
> He stands and waits, and will no entrance win
> Until the latch be lifted from within."

# TARRY OR SLEEP

# TARRY OR SLEEP

THE world rushes on. It urges forward with boastful arrogance, to fresh conquests, mightier achievements, vaster schemes. It rushes on to its triumphs. It rushes on to its doom. A doom foretold, relentless, inexorable as Jehovah's throne. Money, the anodyne of the enemy, has numbed the craving of the multitude for Christ. Pleasure that pleases not intoxicates the brain. To the worldling the faithful witness seems as one who mocks, his words as idle tales.

Yet the call to prayer, the summons to service, have sounded forth for those who care: have sounded forth in this the evening of the Age. Are you an onlooker, or do you obey that call? Come then first to the place of watching, the garden of tears, each remembering that "the Lord hath need of him."

*Gethsemane!* thy name bewrays thee. It means the oil-press, where the life-blood of the olive was squeezed out drop by drop. "And His sweat was as it were great drops of blood." A place well named indeed. A footstool to the throne of grace well chosen.

Here then of set purpose the Son of God resorted. It was an Eastern night. In the distance, through the clear air, the lights of Jerusalem shone cheerily in the darkness, as, careless and callous, its people prepared for the great day of the feast. For the crowds in the capital were all unconscious and un-

concerned that their house was left unto them desolate, and that the Messiah's lament had begun indeed.

Far away on the mountain-side knelt the Son of God, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Alone He knelt and prepared and prayed. Between Him and Jerusalem was a gulf fixed—the valley of the Kidron. Between them, too, was a greater gulf—the Valley of the Shadow of Death. What different preparations! How paralleled to-day!

Who were the watchers—a chosen few? He never willed it so. There is no aristocracy with God. *There are no peers other than the pure in heart.* His Kingdom is founded upon a Divine paradox. He wills it that the weak things shall confound the things that are mighty. He ordains by perpetual decree that through the things that are not, He shall bring to naught the things that are.

Here then there is room for you and for me. And though the watchers on that memorable mountain-side were only three, the inner circle as it were, you see your calling, brethren. It is for you, this watching. It is your most precious birthright, if you will but take it.

It was a supreme moment. Its like could never be seen again. For as in anguish He bowed to the Eternal Father, as He faced for ever the fact and fate of sin, never was the Godhead in such need of human aid. And being in an agony, whose company did He crave? Not cherubim or seraphim, but three rude fishermen; not the twelve legions of angels, but Peter and James and John. The first about to deny Him, the rest to betray Him. These He must have for retinue, this Prince of Peace. None else would do. Oh, priceless privilege! Oh, shameful sleep!

For they, whose presence was preferred to angels, preferred to sleep. Unable to deny themselves, they presently denied their Lord. They stand, for all eternity, examples of the law of atrophy. They show how unused functions fade, and unused powers pass away; how opportunities let slip return no more. The Saviour, in His hour of agony, twice turned to them, twice woke and warned them. The third time was too late. That saddest sentence, "Sleep on now," must close their chance. He planned for them the highest privilege of prayer, the most exalted service. They slumbered on, unconscious of the crisis. Before they realised, the chance was gone.

Yet so it is to-day. For those three sleepers do not stand alone. They were the first forerunners of a multitude of true believers, who, when called to work and watch, have missed the mark; whose motto, instead of being "Saved to serve," seems mainly "Saved to sleep." Only in the better land will the true perspective come. Then, when the promises of God have been translated into facts, looking back on opportunities let slip, we shall realise the poverty of slumber; the eternal loss resulting from lives of "little done."

Yet the greatest grief of all will surely be, His disappointment in His children, for whom He did so much. All this for us; so little in return. Oh, hear His voice! He calls again: "Watch; can you not watch with Me an hour?" For surely there is someone you might win.

Watch for what? "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation," echo the Master's words. Yet there is a deeper watching, a fuller fellowship, a higher office, open to those who love Him, the reward for which

transcends our thoughts. Eye, ear, and heart alike, all fail to comprehend; and only faint glimpses of the coming glory come to those who follow in His service.

He died that we might live. He also died that we might die. There is a fellowship in His sufferings waiting to be revealed, which brings a burning heart, an overflowing cup, an abundant life. This fellowship is for all His own. It is for you who bear His name. His Kingdom is impending, the "Ecclesia" is being called, the lost ones found, the last ones gathered in before He comes.

But is it true that you have "neither part nor lot in this matter"? Is it true that you speak no word of bringing back the King? It is a thousand pities, a thousand shames!

How often He comes and finds His followers asleep! Lovingly He wakes them. With sorrow He reproaches them. "You are Mine," He says; "I have died for you. I have watched you grow from childhood. Daily I have cared for you, and guarded you from evil. I know your fears and failings; but I can remove them. I can send trouble sometimes, and pleasures often, to teach and train you, to prepare you. I have a plan for you; for your life: a plan no other can fulfil but you. I depend on you. Will you not hear My voice, and follow Me? Will you not let Me have the guiding of your life and way? I see the end from the beginning; while you must make mistakes." So, tenderly He pleads. Yet hardly has He left us before we are asleep again. And so His plan is spoiled. It must be changed. It cannot be as good. Through constant slumber, we whittle down His gracious purposes, till some-

times He at last in sorrow says, "Sleep now, and take your rest. It is too late. The chance is gone. Another I must call, who will be faithful."

So He has often to reverse the natural order, and proclaim the first shall be last, and the last first.

I think of the "first" that I have known in the home-lands; first in brain, in knowledge, in intellect. Many of these, He says, are to be last. Even now they have abandoned the race. For them there is no prize impending. Their high calling calls them not. Their love would prompt them to His aid, but there is no time unoccupied; they are in fact preoccupied. Other lords have dominion. "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber. . . . So shall thy poverty come." *First, yet last!*

"And the last first." I have seen many such in the precincts of the foreign mission field. Unlearned and ignorant men; with one business in life, the King's: one object in life, His Glory: one occupation, the buying gold tried in the fire. I see them waving farewell on the coral shore as the mission ship sails out, surrounded by their clustered converts. Often I have plainly heard them declare in prayer, that they seek a country, a better country, that is an heavenly. Of some like these the Master said the world was never worthy. Yet they are last in the eyes of the world. Clothed in rags, living on roots, sleeping in huts, often outcast by their people, truly "destitute, afflicted, tormented." Yet, in spirit, their feet already sometimes tread the streets of the Celestial City. They are content to wait and watch and work until He comes, to be *first at the last.*

Truly His cry to His Church is, "Watch." But

there are many too busy to watch. For watching implies a heart at leisure from itself. Such hearts are rare and hard to find. Once there was no room for Him in the inn. Now He is exalted to the right hand of God, He is done with inns; instead He inhabits hearts. Yet there is little enough room for Him in the hearts of many who are His. For their lives are full, too full. Body and brain and time are absorbed in a round of duties, that seem imperative till seen from the celestial outlook, when they dwarf, and shrivel, and fade from view.

To such servants, so busy that they cannot heed their Lord, His call seems different. The cry to them is:

Tarry!

Tarry! It will not take you long.

Tarry! and open your heart to *Me*.

I can transform it.

I can give you pleasures that will not pall.

I can give you treasures that will not pass away.

Come, Tarry awhile with *Me*.

He is the same Lord,

Yesterday for Peter,

To-day for you,

For ever for all.

Yet Peter's chance in large measure is yours. The Master still calls, "Tarry!"

Must you still sleep?

"Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning:

Lest, coming suddenly, He find you sleeping.

And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!"

# CALVARY

## I. THE TRIAL

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At last the Saviour's hour had come—the hour when He was to be offered. The time was ripe. From now events marched swiftly to their climax. Almost as He spoke that saddest sentence, "Sleep on now," a cluster of flaming torches burst from the city gate, to thread the narrow mountain path in search of Him. The night could not screen Him. The darkness could not deliver Him. For with them was the traitor, and "Judas . . . which betrayed Him knew the place." See them as they descend the steep, from the city into the Kidron valley; the long white beards of the apostate priests mingling with their whiter robes. Whited sepulchres indeed!

And now they climb the slope to Olivet, and enter the garden of His tears. Surely He welcomed them! Surely He longed for the consummation of His Passion, that He might at last deliver the lost! So He waited for that token of perfidy, the traitor's kiss. What a contrast to His own "true token," to Judas and to every other Jew, the blood of the paschal lamb upon the lintel! Surely it cost Him more to suffer that Judas kiss, than to offer His back to the

smiter. Truly, "it were better for that man if he had not been born," than so to have done despite to the Lord of life and glory.

"Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled." And now He, too, was gone. The garden was empty but of memories. He had entered the procession that was to lead Him to His death. It must have been after midnight. From then onwards there could have been little respite or rest for the Son of God, as He was hurried from hall to hall, from court to court, by the rulers of His people. But they could not execute, they could only examine. At dawn He was brought before the Sanhedrin, where they sought false witness against Him; and finding none, reviled Him and blasphemed.

Through all these insults He went with majestic mien. Mostly He answered nothing. "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."

Three successive times He was brought before the Roman Governor, who alone in the city had the power of death. Twice Pilate tried to evade a verdict. Twice he dismissed the Saviour from his court, first to the Sanhedrin, and then to Herod. Against his will the Jewish leaders brought Jesus before him for the third time, determined on His death. Still Pilate temporised and struggled against His condemnation. Hear the formal sentence of the Saviour's earthly judge. Hear, too, the verdict that has been entered in heaven's records. It was this: "I find no fault in this Man." "I have found no cause of death in Him." Upon this verdict, St. Ambrose has declared: "There was no cause of

death in the Man, for He was innocent. But there was cause of death in His name, which He must die in order to make good. His name Jesus upon the Cross was a certificate of the cause, end, and design of His death."

In contrast to the majestic bearing of our Master, how worthy of contempt is the conduct of the Roman Governor, as vainly he tried to temporise. Having two masters, he could not serve them both. He had to choose between justice and the Jews. At last he yielded to the popular clamour, and let the rulers have their way.

First, warned by his wife, he sought to rid himself of all responsibility. So this blind leader of the blind "took water, and washed his hands, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous Man"; and he "delivered Jesus, when he had scourged Him, to be crucified."

Pilate we must despise. And men do scorn him, shun him; yet still they follow him. For he was in very truth a leader of the lost; a leader blind to his eternal interests. He first showed the way. Since then he has had many followers from afar. Why, you who bow to popular opinion; you who rest upon the broken reed of human effort; you who wash yourself in your own self-righteousness, and "will not have this Man to reign over you"—you too are Pilate's follower. You who have only yourself as your saviour, and your own washing for regeneration —you are as pathetic, and helpless, and doomed a figure, *in God's sight*, as was that Roman Governor.

For while you stand aloof, superior, or indifferent to His claims, you do but crucify afresh the Son of

God. None can avoid the stains and stripes of sin. None can evade the issue. None can remain onlookers. Each must be either "partaker of the heavenly calling," or partaker of perdition and the outer darkness. *Such as Pilate's washing may salve the conscience; it cannot salve the soul.* Not so can men be saved, or Christ had never need to die. It is ominous that we read, "Pilate . . . prevailed nothing." And this, too, is prophetic, for *only Christ's blood can avail anything.*

"Jesus he delivered up to their will." "And the soldiers led Him away" to His coronation—with a *crown of thorns!* What pathos! What pain! Throughout the ages, men have vied with each other in devising higher honours for the victor. The regal crown of gold, in the minds of many, was only surpassed by the laurel wreath of fame, that crowned the conqueror. But with unconscious foresight, though with the sublimity of blindness, the mocking soldiery devised a special insignia that so far transcended all previous orders and distinctions, that only the Son of God could wear it worthily and with fitting dignity.

His crown was studded, not with pearls or precious stones, but with thorns. It was a crown not of homage, but of hate; not of monarchy, but of mockery. It was in keeping with the paradox of His coming to this world of His. Recall His record: Born in a manger, earning His daily bread in His humble home, then a homeless wanderer; healing the afflicted, breaking the bread of life to the hungry, a friend of publicans and sinners; misunderstood, and disbelieved by His people; and now at last arrested,

and arraigned by the very priests who presided in His temple: this was the record of His rejection.

It was in keeping, then, that as a crowning insult and indignity, His captors invested Him with a scourging, a purple robe, and a crown of thorns. Then, not knowing what they did, He became the target of the soldiers; the victim of men who mocked and jeered, and who drenched Him with the dregs of their own depravity. The reed, His very sceptre of office, was used to smite Him; even as His very rank and profession of Saviour compelled later the bruising of His bowed head, the piercing of His sacred side upon the Cross.

Ah, here is a record Stranger, more moving, more appalling, than could be imagined! The deed as well as the record is Divine. "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer," the Just for the unjust, that He might melt our hearts to stone.

Then, "they . . . led Him away to crucify Him."

# CALVARY

## II. THE WORLD'S SACRIFICE

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It was the great day of the feast. The capital was crowded. The streets overflowed with Jews and proselytes, gathered from far and near. For days the city had been surging with excitement. The tide of party passion had been rising like a flood. The rulers of the people had fanned into flame the popular excitement; for they were bent on the rejection of the Nazarene. At last they had obtained their desire amidst the plaudits of the populace; a verdict that was no justice at all. For they were determined on His death, and had compassed His conviction, even when He had been pronounced innocent by the Roman Governor. Now at last was come the day of their vindictive revenge.

Yes, the city was in a tumult. The roads were thronged with the multitudes. For all who were come to the feast had heard of this Messiah, who had so stirred up the nation, and who was now condemned to be crucified. Close by the public highway to the North, was the place chosen where this "troubler of the people" should expiate His supposed crime. It

was to be "outside the city walls," on Golgotha, the place of a skull. This choice of site was again only the unconscious fulfilment of the ancient annual type of the "scape-goat"; which ever since the Law was given, bearing all their iniquities upon its head, was sent away "into the wilderness" (Lev. xvi. 21). And "this same Jesus" was indeed the world's Scape-goat; for as He went to His death, He *did* bear our sins, "and not our sins only, but also the sins of the whole world."

Again, by His Father's own provision, He could not suffer inside the city; for it was ordained that "the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also . . . suffered without the gate" (Heb. xiii. 11, 12). Yet note the sequel, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." Many to-day might refrain from remembering this conclusion of the argument; for it is unpalatable and unpopular. Yet it has never been rescinded. True, we ofttimes carry our own reproach, and thereby do despite to our Lord and Master; for men judge Him by us, His disciples. But *His* reproach, the reproach of the Cross, that we shall never outgrow till the glory that shall be revealed when He shall come.

Golgotha then, "without the gate," was chosen as the world's high altar. It was a fitting place. Past it ran the king's highway. The hill itself was high and commanding. Set against the sky, it was plainly visible to the multitudes upon the clustered house-tops of Jerusalem.

See then the attendant multitude that burst out of

the city gate that fateful morning, and overflowed the road on its way to the appointed place. There was the central pathetic figure of the Saviour, as slowly He bore the Cross too heavy for His strength. Round Him was the escort of the Romans; and round Him, too, the bitter escort of His enemies, the scribes and Pharisees. These, with the motley multitude, crowded along the road to Calvary.

There now emerges into view one Simon. Not, indeed, that Simon who had promised to follow his Master to the death. For he of the boasting courage was fled. Shivering and ashamed, crouching before the courtyard fire, his heart had failed him. He found but oaths and curses as his testimony for his Master. So he had fled, pursued by the jeers of the servants, the shame of his own heart, the sorrowful look of his Saviour.

No, this Simon was a stranger to the city, come from far across the sea. Little he dreamed of the unexpected honour that awaited him in the crowded capital. "Him they compelled to carry the Cross after Jesus." What a wealth of meaning in a single sentence! What a blessed bond between the Saviour and the Cyrenian! What happy compulsion! Who would not be a passer-by to be so compelled!

This incident, like a flash of light, illumines the way of the world. Many a burden the Saviour had borne for His disciples. He had comforted and constrained, He had fed and refreshed, those dozen wayward men who formed His earthly retinue. Yes, for three long years He had borne with them, slow of heart as they were to believe. They were called His followers, yet faithless followers they were. For here,

in the last extremity of His earthly pilgrimage, as He trod His Via Dolorosa, the Sin-bearer of the world, on the way to His sacrifice, not only did they fail to die with Him, they even failed a helping hand with the Cross He bore. So the high honour that might have been theirs was given to the Cyrenian stranger.

How like to-day! How many who are bidden to the feast of His service are not ready, not worthy, not willing. How many in the hour of His need, with one consent begin to make excuse. Ah well! "It tendeth only to poverty." Yet remember, friends in the homelands, with all your knowledge and skill and talents, that, failing you, He still has "other sheep" whom He may choose, and honour, and enrich, when those for whom these honours were designed disdain His service. He still singles out the strangers, the *passers-by*, the aliens and the outcasts; while the favoured ones, who many a time have heard His voice and walked His way, and yet have scorned His service, these are the *passed-by*.

We in the Foreign Field see many a despised and once degraded heathen drawing near to "the place that is called Calvary"; there to fall under the sweet compulsion of the Cross, there to be linked on by its blessed bond to the Redeemer, and so to spend this little span of life in His service. "That great day" will see many a strange reversal in positions. He shall "put down the mighty from their seats," and shall "exalt them of low degree." Yet it is not too late to qualify for promotion. The lists are still open. Commissions are still being given to the rank and file. Napoleon said once, with a flash of genius, that every common soldier carried a field marshal's

baton in his knapsack. More truly, more certainly, each and every recruit from the cross so carries undreamed-of possibilities in his heart. Commissions, and converts, and crowns of glory, all may be his. Yet surpassing all other honours, there is the King's "Well done!" and the power of bringing joy to Him.

"Him they compelled." How needful to-day! How many of us are only in this honourable service because we were compelled; because we found that if we would not give, He in kindness sometimes takes. Is He taking from you? Is He trying you? He is the kindest surgeon; He wounds only to heal. May He help you to learn the lesson He would teach; and compel you to accept the honours He holds out, that literally lead to glory.

Note now the compensation that went with the compulsion. How significant is the Divine Record. "He bore it after Jesus." That is ever the order. For, putting forth His sheep, "*He goeth before them.*" Escorting the chosen few to Gethsemane, "*He went a little farther*" than ever He asked of them. Leading on to His sacrifice on Calvary, He is still first, and the Cyrenian is already His follower, bearing the Cross "*after Jesus.*" "O thou of little faith, wherefore dost *thou* doubt?"

And now, as the multitude nears the crest of Calvary, think for a moment of the climax that was at last approaching. God's peculiar people had been set apart that they might be a witness to the nations around, and that they might prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. But they had long been apostate; and though there were a faithful few who looked for the consolation of Israel, the bulk of the

people had left the faith of their fathers, and in place of being a witness, were a byword and a reproach. So that when Emmanuel appeared, they knew Him not; but hiding their faces from Him, in place of the welcome of a Crown, they rejected Him on a Cross.

Now it must be remembered that the cross was the fate of the felon; the death that was the bitterest brand of shame. Indeed, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." It corresponds to-day to the hangman's noose. Such a death, devised with the utmost cruelty of the Romans to torture the body and stain the soul of the crucified, was the fate reserved for the beloved Son of God, the Creator of the world. Yet with ineffable majesty, with regal disregard for the stigma and the stain, God the Almighty changed defeat into victory when He lifted the Cross from infamy to fame, from shame to shining glory. So that, in place of being the most ignoble and ignominious of deaths, it is to-day the most sacred symbol the world has known. Indeed, *the Cross is the sign manual of Christ's unending Kingdom.*

Surely this is but a precedent and a prediction of what He can do for the sinner, of what He can do for you and for me. He alone knows the corruption that attaches to the human heart. We indeed know this in part, but only in part. Yet as the Saviour made Himself of no reputation, but took upon Himself the death and the curse of the Cross, that He might transfigure it to be the symbol of purity and pardon; even so He is able to take the vilest sinner, the most feeble and faithless believer, and impart new qualities of heart that will cause them to be a

convincing testimony to the world of His power to save to the uttermost.

And now the Cross was erected, and on it was transfixed the suffering Saviour. No human words are worthy to describe the scene that followed. None but His own. "*Father, forgive them,*" He cried in agony, as the nails tore deep; "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*" What a wealth of woe unutterable the words betray! What depths of despair! Deep calling unto deep, "all thy waves and thy billows are gone over Me." "Oh, what a welcome for the Eternal Guest!" None can ever know a tithe of what it cost the Lord's Christ, or of what it meant to the world; never till we know as we are known. Yet even here and now we may know in part, as we become conformed to His image, and as through the fellowship of His sufferings we are "made conformable unto His death." But oh, how mean and paltry and unprofitable all that we can give Him in return seems, when seen in the light of the Cross. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world was crucified to me, and I unto the world."

"Pray for those that despitefully use you," He once said; and so He prayed, "Father, forgive them." For indeed, "having loved . . . He loved unto the uttermost." May we His servants be enabled to emulate our Master, through "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."

"These things therefore the soldiers did," in unconscious fulfilment of an ancient prophecy (Ps. xxii. 18). For, that the scripture might be fulfilled,

His bodyguard of four, that soon had only His body to guard, "parted His garments, casting lots for them." What had He to leave them, this crucified Messiah? No lands, or jewels, riches or estates. Only His frail and broken body, some simple clothes, a seamless robe; and that was all, all that the soldiers got. Truly for our sakes He did become poor! Then, callous of heart, "sitting down, they watched Him there." How true to-day! How prophetic of the present! How many millions have done, and do, the same. They make no move. They bend no knee. They give no glory to the Son of God. They sit, and watch, unmoved, until *they* die and pass away; all unconcerned until too late.

In startling contrast to the soldiers, turn now to the dying thief. As is usual there are two sides to the story: the side of the thief, and the side, the streaming side, of the Crucified.

The dying thief was a miracle of *faith.* For we cannot but marvel at the sublime daring of this malefactor. "Lord," he cries, "remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." What folly! No! what faith! St. Bernard, an ancient writer, addresses the penitent like this: "Whence didst thou know that that same Person that died in thy company, and passed for a malefactor like thyself, how didst thou know that He was thy Lord and Saviour?" And he makes him answer like this: "Oh," says he, "I could discern it by the very testimony of His enemies. Those words which they flung upon Him in reproach, 'He saved others . . . Himself He cannot save'; this looks so like a Saviour, to save others by giving up Himself!"

The dying Saviour was a miracle of *grace*. Do you sometimes think He is too great a Personage to be occupied with your puny appeal? Here is your answer: He is not "an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Here, too, is His answer: if at any time or place He might have been preoccupied with His pain and Passion, it was upon the Cross. Bowed down with the world's woe, smitten with the sense of His Father's averted face, distracted with His own distress, even then He must be about His Father's business; even then He yearned for the lost, whom He was even now dying to find. With what deep joy He must have made rejoinder to the penitent. For no longer was His salvation far future, but present; no longer did He promise, He presently could perform. "To-day," He says, "to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

It was the age of triumphs. The age when conquerors, returning from victory, led their captives in chains behind their chariots. And whom did they so lead? The slaves and the serfs, the debased and debauched? No; but rather kings and princes, the mighty and the noble. Who then led the triumphal progress of the King of kings? Who headed the long line of captives redeemed and freed, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation? Who was to be the first trophy bought by the Saviour's triumph? Who but a thief, a malefactor! With what proud pomp did the Saviour make entry into the heavenlies, with this outcast of earth, who had become an heir to heaven! What mind of man could have imagined such a climax, such a culmina-

tion of the crucifixion? No! This is none other than the hand of God!

There the Creator hung upon the Cross, exposed to the taunts of the tormentors. But the blaze of that brilliant noonday failed to illuminate their blinded hearts, or to reveal the Eternal Spirit, that dwelt in that outstretched, fainting Frame, to those dark murderers. For the chief priests with the elders and the scribes, stood and mocked Him in their folly: "He saved others; Himself He cannot save!" Thus unwittingly they testified to the profoundest truth; a truth that is the secret of the world's salvation. In the light of history, in the clearer light of faith, we now know that *He* could *save others only because Himself He* would *not save.* "Let Him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe on Him!" they challenged. But that was the one thing that the Son of God would not do; for had He come down from the Cross, He must have left behind His best loved name of Jesus, and we must have reversed the order and said: "He hath saved Himself, therefore He cannot save us."

To conceive all the intensity of His suffering, to have the mind of Christ, and thus enter into the Divine desolation of the stricken Lamb of God, it is needful to go back to the outpouring of the Saviour's heart in the twenty-second Psalm. For we cannot believe that those pregnant words were only David's cry. Moved by the Spirit of God, He spoke for Another, the latchet of whose shoe he, the appointed king, was not worthy to unloose. He here prefigured the sufferings that were to come upon the Lord's Anointed. We speak much of the Seven Words

from the Cross, and they do reveal the mind of the Crucified. But here! here is the outpouring of His heart; here is the chorus of the Crucified; here surely is some of that "strong crying and tears" which He offered to the Father. To realise the spirit of Calvary, we must needs be saturated with the heartbreak of this sacrificial psalm. There His anguish is explained in all its woe.

(1) *He is despised and rejected of men.* The air is vibrant with the mockers who intrude upon His death. They laugh Him to scorn. They shoot out the lip, saying, "He trusted in the Lord that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him!" His breast is bared to the smiter. His garments stolen, to be parted among them. He is stripped but of His Kingly dignity. He may tell all His bones. They look and stare. They gape upon Him with their mouths. Here were *indignities* enough!

(2) *He was wounded for our transgressions.* Here is the tale of the sufferings of His body. I am poured out like water. My tongue cleaveth to My jaws. My strength is dried up like a potsherd. They pierced My hands and My feet. All My Bones are out of joint. So *was His visage marred more than any man!* These were *pains* enough!

(3) *He was smitten of God.* This transcended all. See how He suffered! "Be not far from Me! Be not Thou far from Me, O Lord. O My Strength, haste Thou to help Me. Deliver My soul from the sword. O My God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not, and in the night season. Why art Thou so far from helping Me? My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Here was *anguish* enough!

*So the Lord laid upon Him the iniquities of us all.*

About the sixth hour darkness fell—merciful darkness. Before such suffering even the sun veiled his face. Then came the midnight of the world's history; surely the darkest hour before the dawn. Before this omen of God's displeasure, the tumult and the shouting died. The silence of fear fell on the beholders. At last through the stillness rang the Saviour's triumphant cry, "*It is finished!*" "And the earth did quake, and the rocks rent." So, by the grace of God, Christ died that we might live. *This is indeed the apex of all epochs,* wherein the Jewish Messiah was rejected, the faith of the faithful was redeemed, and the Creator of the world became both its unresisting Victim and its *irresistible Victor.* Then out of the quaking fear of the darkness, broke the centurion's hoarse cry of worship: "Truly this was the Son of God!"

So "He bowed His head," and "dismissed His spirit." Then the crucifixion became a coronation; for, "the Head that once was crowned with thorns, is crowned with glory now." Before Him the angels veil their faces. *All wreaths of Empire meet upon His brow,* even as "all knees shall bow before Him, and all tongues shall confess Him."

*Hail to the Lord's Anointed.*

Meanwhile, from the eminence of the altar inside the temple walls, abandoned and left "desolate" by Christ, the smoke from the sacrifice of the sin-offering rose slowly and forlorn to Heaven. It rose in vain! For even then "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." There was no longer need for the blood of bulls and of goats. For the work was com-

plete. The deed was done. God's design was accomplished. The earthly altar was abolished. "For where remission . . . is, there is no more offering for sin."

Then, "the veil of the Temple was rent from the *top* to the *bottom*" by the hand of God. Henceforward there was no barrier to His Presence; no need of priest as Mediator; no exclusion of His saints from the holiest. For now we have the right of entry, not as "the high priest, alone, once every year, not without blood"; but "we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way . . . that is to say, His flesh." "*Let us then draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith!*"

And in heaven they fell down before the Lamb, and they sung a new song, saying: *Thou art worthy . . . for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*"

"*Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.*"

For "*His name shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: . . . All nations shall call Him blessed.*"

"*Blessed be the Lord God. . . . Who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen.*"

# HIS TITLE DEEDS

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It was the Resurrection morning. The day that was the calm after the storm of the nation's hate had spent itself. As is usual after such an outburst, there was probably a revulsion of popular feeling. There is no record of any attempt on the part of the Jews to apprehend or arrest or scatter the followers of the Nazarene. The heavens seemed silent. No dire result had overtaken the people for their impious undertaking, when they had clamoured, "His blood be on us and on our children." Apparently the action of the Jewish authorities had been successful; and now the sect of the Nazarenes would be broken up, no longer to jeopardise the Jewish nation with the Romans. Assuredly, "it was expedient that one man should die for the people."

We know now that on that day the Saviour rose triumphant o'er the grave; that the seeming silence was no admission of defeat. It was but the signal of victory, that needed no popular clamour to proclaim it; for pæans of joy and praise were being chanted in the highest heavens. For Christ had led captivity captive. He had finished His redemptive work, which has been such a benison to mankind. So we celebrate our Easter Day with gladness and thanks-

giving, as the day that ushered in a new era of peace and rest for the redeemed.

Yet that is not the way the disciples spent that first memorable Easter morn. It was no time of joy to them. Instead, blank despair and hopeless sorrow filled their hearts. The picture of the Lord they loved, hanging in agony on the Cross, was still too vivid in their minds. They could not so soon forget how His broken body had been tenderly laid to rest in the solitude of Joseph's silent tomb. They had lost their Master, who for three years had grown ever more dear. All their dearest dreams seemed ended. No wonder foreboding filled their hearts.

But soon bewilderment was added to their sorrows. For strange stories were afloat. Some said He was alive; that He was risen from the dead. For certain women of their company amazed them, saying "they had seen a vision of angels, which said He was alive." Then two of their number confirmed this story, saying it was even as the women had affirmed. But most of the men frankly disbelieved these idle tales.

That afternoon two of them were going to a village called Emmaus. It lies to the north-west of the city, some seven miles away. We do not know their errand; but we know the subject of their conversation, as with heavy hearts they toiled along that winding mountain road. For as they left the city, they passed again "the green hill" where had sounded the death-knell of their hopes. It was empty and deserted now; the Crucified was gone, the crowd was gone, their hopes were gone. There could be but one theme for them that day: "concerning Jesus of Nazareth." They, too, had heard the women's story.

But "having hoped that it had been He that should have redeemed Israel," they could not yet grasp the fact that through His death was the only way to life; and that it was not the collapse, but the climax, of God's plans for the world.

As they wended their way, a gracious figure joined them. Although they knew it not, it was the Saviour. He, too, would go that day to Emmaus. What took the risen Saviour along that mountain path that afternoon? What went He forth for to see? Of set purpose He walked that way to meet two men. Of set purpose the meeting with the twain, and its blessed happy results, are recorded by the Holy Ghost. And why is this encounter so lovingly detailed, when the Saviour's meeting with Peter (Luke xxiv. 34) is but referred to? There is a reason for those who seek. There is a reason why all the incidents in the Word of God are selected out of the "many things also." They did not come by chance. It reassures the doubter, and confirms the faith of the believer, to know that they are selected because they fit the human heart; because in these seemingly simple incidents are enshrined the principles of God's dealings with man. To reveal these principles, so that we might profit by them, "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." They need searching out, as gold needs mining. They are hidden from the casual reader. Nor will they yield their treasures to the natural mind of man; but "God hath revealed them by His Spirit." "The wayfaring men . . . shall not err therein."

This touching story of the two dejected men and the attendant Saviour is recorded because it is a true

picture of life. Just so men walk to-day. Just so they are sad and lost in questionings. Just so is their trouble evident to the passer-by. That day, seeing two men in genuine grief and perplexity, could the Saviour restrain Himself from following, to comfort them? It was not possible. "Jesus Himself drew near."

How like is this to the endless benediction upon the world, that is contained in the matchless parable of the prodigal. There, the stately father, unable to restrain his love, when the shiftless prodigal appeared, "ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." What a revelation of the depths of feeling and affection in the father's heart! So on that momentous morning the Saviour showed Himself again and again to His wistful, wondering followers. So He drew near to the two. So He draws near to-day. Oh, believe it; and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, you may be pillowed on His breast!

The result of that interview is well known. It has been repeated since to multitudes of men. Many is the walk He has taken. Many the wayfarer He has cheered. Many is the mourner who has, in like manner, gone on his way rejoicing; whose joyful heart within him burned because *He* walked with him.

When "their eyes were opened," and He had vanished out of their sight that they might learn to walk by faith, "they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem." There they "found the eleven gathered together," who had as strange a story as themselves to tell. While they were yet speaking of these things, *Jesus Himself stood in the midst.*

His Passion was past. His work was finished.

The world's Atonement was attained. He had triumphed over death. But ere He returned again to His Father, how does this risen Lord greet His followers? What Gospel does He give them? Does He point them to the purity of His life? Does He urge them to fresh endeavours, reminding them of the sublimity of His sayings? Or set before them again "His matchless system of ethics"? Does He, in brief, set Himself forth as the example they should follow, and then exhort them to go and do likewise, as does so much of the preaching of to-day, that is so powerless?

No. In His first greetings He does none of these things; for He knows that were useless. That were indeed an idle tale.

Human reformers can point the way to purity; can advise men to advance and improve, and so be done with sin. But they cannot lift mankind out of the pit. To do that they are powerless. Their words are worthless, and avail nothing. They leave man as they found him, deep in the slough of despond, crying out, "Oh, wretched man that I am." Yet in this age of reason and research, that is precisely the gospel that is being preached. "There is no need of a Saviour. Man already is Divine." But he must have lofty ideals that will uplift him. He must be pointed higher, that he may climb into the heavenlies. The only use for "Jesus" is an example to be emulated, an ideal to be imitated.

The result is that, merely imitating Christ, men soon have an imitation Church, and an imitation Christianity, which being powerless, is despised and ignored by the world. Behold, their Church is left unto them desolate!

In so grave a crisis no human opinion will serve; for opinions differ. We need *a Divine pronouncement* from the highest heavens. *The Saviour gives it.* He came to the upper room, in His resurrection glory, fresh from His victory o'er the grave. He came charged with a message of tremendous import. He came to the scattering circle through whom He was to evangelise the world. He came to inspire them for this stupendous project; to reassure them that they would succeed. What then was to be the secret of their success? Upon what must they rely? In what fact must they rally?

*He showed unto them His hands and His side.* But that day one man was missing. For his sake the Saviour came again, after eight days. But His message was unchanged. The plan of campaign was the same. "Reach hither," He said to Thomas, "reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing."

What was the Divine and eternal significance of these repeated interviews and actions? Pascal puts it thus: "Christ allowed only His wounds to be touched after His resurrection. Hereby I perceive that we can be united to the Saviour only through His sufferings." Hence the reason that all His emphasis and all their notice were directed, not to His words, but to *His wounds.*

There is a hidden, pathetic, and strangely moving meaning in His actions that evening. "Peace be unto you; . . . and He showed unto them His hands and His side." Why this order? What connection was there between the words and the act? It was as

if He would say: "I have promised you so much and so long. Now at last I can fulfil My promise. I spoke of the peace of God; I can give it to you now, for behold My hands and My side. They show that I have died. They prove that I have paid the price. Now it is Mine to give peace to as many as come unto God by Me. Peace be unto you." The same thought is brought out in His interview with Mary; when His message to the disciples was, "I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God." Now they were united to Him through His sufferings; and, redeemed from the curse, His Father was their Father too. It was the first time they had a right to the title; for they had come into a new relationship through the efficacy of the Cross. So He had said, I go to My Father and your Father, to *Our Father.*

It is very wonderful, what evident joy it brought to the Lord, to be at last able to give His peace, the peace that passeth understanding, to these that had continued with Him in His temptations. For their hearts were heavy, they needed His comfort and presence. He hardly waited therefore till the two from Emmaus had told their story; for, "as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them." Has He changed? Has His love cooled? Ah, well we know "He changeth not." This then we can do to-day; we can give Him joy by accepting His peace.

Now when men purchase a possession, a deed is drawn, as proof to all men that the purchase has been completed. It is written with ink that will last for centuries. It is recorded on parchment specially pre-

pared, that is the most durable and lasting of any medium known to man. The object is obvious. A permanent record is required that will be a proof of the transaction to all men, for all time. Such deeds are then deposited in a safe, proof against thieves, and able to withstand fire and flood.

The most stupendous purchase the world has known was effected on Calvary. By His dying on the Cross the Saviour expiated our sins, and bought us for Himself. He "purchased our pardon." What title deed was adequate for such a transaction? What record was imperishable enough for a purchase upon which so vast an issue depended? And where could such a deed be stored in safety? For in this world thieves and moths and rust abound, and riches take to themselves wings.

All these questions are answered for us in His own broken body. The ink used to attest our pardon was His precious everlasting blood. The parchment was His own incorruptible body. *His healed wounds are our title deeds to heaven.* And the record is in His own safe keeping. "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands," sang the seer of old; and literally has it been fulfilled. The deed of Christ's atoning grace shall never pass away. For as truly as He is from everlasting to everlasting, even so is His record of our pardon.

There is a special significance now in the fact that His proof of our pardon is accessible and at hand; in fact, in His hand. For when the accuser of the brethren . . . which accused them before our God day and night, utters his lies, the Saviour, who has sat down at the right hand of God, and who is our

Advocate, has the proof of our quittance in His pierced hands. No further proof is needed.

The pen, they say, is mightier than the sword. But far mightier than any sword ever drawn in His service, more potent than any prophetic pen recording His Word, far transcending these in power are the nails that transfixed His kingly hands. For when they nailed Him to the Cross, they loosed us from our sins. They wrote His title deeds and ours in His own indelible blood, so that they are plain, and permanent, and imperishable. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!"

Now when the Saviour stood before them, saying, "Peace be unto you," He represented the ineffable wisdom of the Godhead. He was no longer the Man of Sorrows, but the Rejoicing Redeemer; no longer the homeless Stranger, but the Heavenly Heir of all things. He who was in the beginning with God, had now left His earthly life behind. And now this risen victorious Christ, the Son of the Father, the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, came to the disciples for His farewell interviews. So there is an intensity of meaning and importance in all He said, that repays the most careful examination. These were His last counsels to the Church. Henceforth the Holy Spirit would be the Comforter and the Counsellor.

It was with special intention then that He again in His risen glory and power and knowledge deliberately and most emphatically set His seal on the *Scriptures*, from which He had taught, and upon which He had based so many of His discourses and so much of His teaching.

First hear this testimony as to the origin and authority of His doctrine: His *works* had been the Father's works; for "the Son of Man can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do." Of His *doctrines* He said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." His *words*, too, He received from the Father, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. "The words which Thou gavest Me, I have given them." "I do nothing of Myself; but as the Father has taught Me, I do these things." In all this He was the perfect Servant, the sinless Son.

And now risen from the grave, and in the conscious fulness of His resurrection power, was there any word of His previous teaching while upon earth that was not founded on fact, that must be withdrawn or modified? *Not one word.* The sign of Jonah was still a sign from God. *All* His sayings were established. Having said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away," there was no need to retract or to modify the statement; for it was literally and eternally true.

But instead of withdrawing His testimony that the Scriptures *were* the very Word of God, He twice clearly and unmistakably affirms and establishes the fact. With the two from Emmaus, "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them, *in all the Scriptures*, the things concerning Himself." Then before He finally ascended, "He said unto them, *These are My words which I spake unto you*, how that *all* things must needs be fulfilled which are written in *the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms*, concerning *Me*." The Scriptures are not "cunningly devised fables"; but "a more sure word of prophecy."

In all Christ's appearances after He was risen, there was not one questioning note, not one accent of doubt, as to His message; but a calm serenity of spirit, that all was as He had told them, for His Kingdom was founded not on myths or legends, but on the Word of His Father. There was only one source of knowledge concerning Himself, concerning salvation, concerning life eternal. Such knowledge could not be "evolved from man's inner consciousness"; it was to be found only in these very Scriptures which He had opened to them. These they were to search; "for they are they which testify of Me."

We have no authority to assume that because Christ lived His sinless life, we shall gain eternal life by imitating Him. That were impossible, and we assume it at our peril. *We do know*, and we are assured, by His former words and by His present actions, that *He died that we might live.* We may accept, or we may reject; but we cannot alter the fact.

The key to the heavenlies is still the *Cross.* The fount of knowledge is still the *Scriptures.* Our *title deeds* to heaven are still *His wounded hands.* "*I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.*"

# THE CHRISTIAN'S CREDENTIAL

# THE CHRISTIAN'S CREDENTIAL

"*Without Me ye can do nothing.*"

"*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels . . . though I have the gift of prophecy, and have not love, I am nothing.*"

"*The fruit of the Spirit is love.*"

"*Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me . . . unto the uttermost parts of the earth.*"

MANY of us are all too familiar with the disciples' feelings when "they questioned, Why could not we cast him out?" We can sympathise with them when "they all forsook Him and fled." We know too well what it means to meet behind closed doors for fear. We too have denied Him.

Alas, that these things represent the normal Christian life of so many! Yet knowing the failure of one's own life in this respect for many years; knowing from their own statements, indeed from their own faces, that these conditions of heart are ever present with many true believers, it is evident that God's plans are not being realised in such lives.

*What then is lacking?* What was it that enabled craven Peter, with his fellow Apostles, to depart

victorious from the presence of the Council, "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name"? The answer is found in the Spirit's sublime record: "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and . . . spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts iv. 31). Further, what enabled Peter, the unsuccessful fisherman, when appointed to catch men for his Master, to be so happy as to prevail with about three thousand of them in one sermon? How convincing is the reason! "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts ii. 4). Finally, what changed these querulous quarrelling disciples to be "more than conquerors"? How simple is the reason, yet how profound! "The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost."

It is evident, then, that for the Christian the essential to a life of victory, of rejoicing, of successful service, consists in being "filled with the Spirit." But how? How is this heavenly benison to be obtained? On this subject there is much difference of opinion. And in a matter like this we must speak the truth in love, each esteeming other better than themselves. One thing is certain, if you are not enjoying this filling of the Spirit, it belongs to you by right of sonship.

All are agreed that first there must be an entire yielding of the will, and an unconditional surrender to the Spirit. All known sin must be confessed and abandoned. Nothing must be held back. The government must be upon His shoulder. In the view of many, the Spirit does then fill and overflow the soul to the limit of its capacity. And it is

certainly true that in this way many saints of God are possessing their possessions and privileges, and have done so in a steadily increasing degree, right from the day of conversion.

Thus in the experience of many honoured servants of God, there has been no knowledge of any sudden change, comparable to that which we read of as happening to believers in the Acts. Instead there is a steady growth in grace, a constant pressing toward the mark; God meanwhile witnessing through them by the conversion of souls and the edifying of saints.

Yet it is a fact, admitted probably by all, that God does not lead all His people through the same spiritual experiences. Thus we dare not lay down the law for God's operations in the human heart, nor make hard and fast conditions for the gift of His Holy Spirit. We each can only speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen. Like the blind man, our explanation of His coming may be simple and yet be certain. Whereas we were blind, now we see. Whereas we were empty and defeated, now we have the evidence of victory in our hearts. Such a change cannot be explained away. It is too real. It is too precious a possession to part with.

For at least with many of us this life of victory, this rejoicing in the Holy Ghost, this power for service, have only come after a further step; they have only come after definite *recognition* by faith of the Holy Spirit's indwelling, and definite conscious *claiming* and *acceptance* of His infilling. In a word, as we began in faith at conversion, believing God's statements in spite of feelings, so we must continue to walk by faith in the after stages of the pilgrim

way. Faith consists in taking God at His word. We did this in the matter of forgiveness of sin. Many of us have had to do it also in the matter of power for service and for victory. For it cannot be denied or ignored, that many in the Master's service to-day only became possessed of this great inheritance by a definite act of faith, when we recognised and claimed the presence of the Paraclete in fulness.

True, He was there before; for "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." He was there from the day of the new birth; but was He enthroned?

Yet in one's own case, the heart had been honestly surrendered, the will had many times been bowed to His, and I cannot doubt that often before, all had been on the altar; nothing was knowingly held back. Why then this sudden change when, in despair, alone before God, without excitement, this promise was quietly claimed: "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost"; "Ye shall receive power"? Why was it? I cannot tell. "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness!"

But the fact, the momentous fact, can never be forgotten. Although there is a distinction between the Israelite under law and the believer under grace, the words that recount the equipment of Saul the son of Kish are so apt, and so exact a description of the change that after some days came over one's own life, that I cannot forbear quoting them: "The Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou shalt be changed into another man." This is not to be confounded with the new birth, which had happened many years before. But those words, "changed

into another man," seemed literally true of one's life after that quiet deliberate act of faith.

Not that sin was done away with, or the proneness to sin; that, it seems, we shall carry to the grave. But the balance of power was transferred. Before, in spite of prayer and earnest striving, and honest desire for the best that God could give, there was heart-breaking defeat, repeated relapse, and constant backsliding. So that often one was constrained to cry out in the words of the Apostle Paul, "Oh, wretched man that I am!" But now the Holy Spirit was no longer on the *threshold*; instead, He was on the *throne*. In very truth, the government was on His shoulders. And though, no doubt, there were many known as well as unknown lapses and blemishes, it was now no longer a question of rising to fall again; but rather, if fallen, of rising again.

Looking back on those happy months and years—when all heaven seemed opened, when new possibilities appeared, and became changed into blessed facts—the conscious presence of God was realised to be no longer unusual, but normal. Then truly and literally one humbly and thankfully began to live a life of victory, and the phrase "more than conquerors" for the first time became dimly understood. And speaking thus does not seem like presumption; for the change was so marked, so sudden, so definite, that it was evidently due not at all to one's own exertions or merits, but to a superhuman Power, to a Divine afflatus, to the happy recognition and reception of a heavenly Visitor, who came into the heart no longer as guest, but who now was installed as Guide.

And this change, be it noted, was not to be con-

cealed from those around. A bubbling spring must overflow; a burning heart must glow and shine, and be the cause of rejoicing in those around. There came too, to one unaccustomed to speaking, a power for service as welcome as it was necessary. There opened, too, a pathway to service, that ended in the Foreign Mission Field. In fact, to put it reverently and thankfully, that one act of faith, in recognising and claiming the fulness of the Spirit, in answer to His offer and promise to abide—that one act unlocked the gateway into the delectable mountains, and ushered one from the winter of a sinful life into the warmth, the light, the pleasure of His Presence, *the summer of His service.* True it is, that this doctrine has led many another discouraged disciple out into the happy wealth of work for Him; it has procured many a passage to the Foreign Mission Field.

But before God thus allows His promise to be changed into fact by the faith of man, there are certain conditions which must be fulfilled. Not lightly will God grant this unspeakable Gift in fulness. The asking must not be for selfish motives, but for the greater glory of God. The soul must be empty of self. All known sin must be confessed and abandoned. All doubtful practices must be forsaken. A tender conscience must be cultivated. The will must be yielded to His, and the soul must be prepared to follow and obey Him, against all seeming appearances.

There is no need for emotion in such a transaction and transformation. For faith is not emotion. Faith is opposed to feelings. Feelings are transient and untrustworthy, and have been the downfall of many a

Christian. An act of faith, however, is a definite and deliberate transaction, by which we believe a promise of God; and in consequence of that act, God changes His promise into a present literal fact for us.

Thus after claiming by faith, this filling becomes a present fact. The point where it would seem that most make shipwreck in this matter, is that having concluded the transaction, having claimed by faith, they go forward trusting in feelings and not in God. *Now no man takes a step in faith, but he is tested upon it.* Abraham went forth by faith into the land of promise; he was tested by a famine in the land. So it always is, and must be, in the spiritual life. We must possess our possessions before further advance is possible.

Even so, after a man receives the Holy Ghost in fulness, he will be tested. His heart will tell him that it is all a mistake, that nothing has happened, that there is no change. Nor will there be in his feelings. Then—though God is not unfaithful, but has fulfilled His promise, and is only waiting to reveal His presence—frequently, in panic, the position is abandoned, the high calling is forgotten, and the soul lapses back into despair and a belief that victory is impossible, and the promised heaven upon earth a mirage. Yet it is possible to cross the desert and reach the delectable mountains; but you will have to learn to stand fast, to believe in the dark, to count He is faithful that promised, in spite of feelings.

For in due time, it may be after days or even months, holding fast "that thou hast," the blessed Paraclete will manifest His presence; and then will come the rejoicing heart, the power for service, the victorious life so longed for.

Yet this transaction once accomplished must be repeated day by day. "He that is washed hath no need save to wash his feet." The defilements of the daily walk must be confessed and cleansed away; that the soul may again be filled overfull, to overflow around in blessed service.

And should ever barrenness and backsliding fall like a pall upon the soul, and the smiling land of His promises again become a desert, oh, do not despair! He is the same. He is waiting with long patience. The key of faith will still unlock all doors that bar you from His presence. Trust Him, and still you will find Him true. Come and confess all to the Father; He will forgive you for the sake of His dear Son. Then again, in the old simple way, claim by faith the filling of His Spirit, and you shall enter once more the land of rejoicing.

*The fulness of the Holy Ghost is the Christian's credential*, without which sowing will be fruitless. It is the one infallible proof needed to convince the world. It will be marvellously effective in operation; for it is unique and unknown, and not at all to be come at by the worldling. "And if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye be neither barren nor unfruitful."

The Saviour through His agony, His Cross, His Passion, has bought this gift for you. Again He says it is yours if you are His. *And shall it be unclaimed, unrealised? Go in and possess the land! So shall you feed upon green pastures, and ever be full folded in the Saviour's arms.*

# THE COMPULSION OF CHRIST'S MISSIONARY COMMAND

## I. THE UNSATISFYING PAST

*"Man, earthy, of the earth, an hungered feeds*
*On earth's dark poison tree,*
*Wild gourds, and deadly roots, and bitter weeds;*
*And as his food is he.*
*And hungry souls there are that find and eat*
*God's manna day by day:*
*And glad they are; their life is fresh and sweet,*
*For as their food are they."*

G. Ter Steegen.

# THE COMPULSION OF CHRIST'S MISSIONARY COMMAND

## I. THE UNSATISFYING PAST

NIGHT was on the Sea of Galilee. A boat showed darkly through the gloom, toiling in rowing. The lumbering clank of the oars at times reached the shore; as well as the low muffled voices of the fishermen as they hauled their nets with practised skill, and laboured through the night. Morning was long in coming. But at last the boat made slowly towards the shore, with its tired freight. Yet it was empty, but of dripping nets and disappointed men. For *that night they caught nothing.*

That boat and its freight are worthy of the closest scrutiny. They embody a profound object lesson. They were learning in a night the true philosophy of life; a truth which many never learn, or learning, learn too late. Those men had a Master. Years before, just thus, He had found them fishing by the lake-side. He walked that way to call them. Lovingly He cast His gracious compulsion over them, as they were casting a net into the sea. "Come after Me," He said, "and I will make you fishers of men"; and so called them to higher service.

They followed with varying faith for years, until He died and rose again. And now as they waited in Galilee for His appearing, impetuous Peter cried, "I go a-fishing." And as "no man liveth unto himself," at once there was a chorus—"We also go with thee." Here may have been no declension of heart; some say there was none. Peter may have been only "putting in time"; or he may have been impatient of his Lord's delay; or he may have been discouraged, and turning back to his old livelihood. We cannot tell. But the result is the same; "they caught nothing."

Yet that was a fruitful night for them. For though they caught no fish, they found the truth, and learned the relative worthlessness and worth of life. *For they found that, experts as they were, the old fishing was no longer successful, the old life was no longer satisfying.* For being designated by their Lord for better things, for higher destinies, for more enduring service, He could not, would not, smile upon their labours. He was ambitious for His servants, ambitious for their best. He would protect them from themselves. And so, in kindness, He let them empty-handed toil throughout the night.

And the sequel to that night of disappointment? As in the dim light of the morning they drew to land, "Jesus stood on the shore." As usual, He was waiting; waiting till they had found their failure. First He showed them that just as with Him left out success was impossible, even so He, when He was come, could alter everything, and fill their boat with fish and their hearts with joy. For, casting the net "on the right side of the ship, now they were not able

to draw it for the multitude of fishes." Thus we perceive that simple joys and pleasures are not forbidden to the believer; but when in their right place, surrendered to Him, sanctioned by Him, they are enhanced, enriched, ennobled. Thus it becomes true that, to the Christian,

> "Heaven above is brighter blue,
> Earth around is richer green;
> Something lives in every hue
> Christless eyes have never seen."

Yet He can only make this true as long as such things are in their right place. They may be the flowers to be picked by the way, as we press toward the mark; but pursuing pleasure must not become the business of life, or He addeth no blessing therewith: for He has ordained that the soul, once having known the riches of His grace, the satisfaction of His service, can never be content with less, but must feed upon His pastures ever green, and follow where He leads.

And now they are clustered round Him on the shore; and Peter, self-conscious Peter, the author of that long night's fruitless toil, he too is among them. Then what does the Saviour do? Does He chide, rebuke, reproach them, as well He might? *No. First He feeds them!* that is ever the order. That is always His way. Take heart of grace, thou wanderer; for when His gracious voice asked, "Children, have ye any meat?" He knew full well thy wayward steps, thine empty hands, thy famished discontented heart. And when John cried, "It is the Lord!" he voiced the truth. It *was* the Lord. *He*

was the reason why the nets were empty; He is the reason why thy hands and heart are like them. Yet already He has provided for thy present needs. Even now upon the shore is the "fire of coals, . . . and fish . . . thereon, and bread." *Coals of fire indeed!* "Come," then He said to them, He says to all, "and break your fast." What a meal! What memories! What emotions!

Then comes the inevitable parting of the ways; the *changeless choice*, that must be made by each and all. Close by were the pellucid waters of the lake, so dear and familiar. There were the boats drawn up ashore; at Peter's feet the glittering heap of fresh caught fish. Behind him lay the well-remembered days, the fishing so congenial, the simple home, the quiet life. Before? Trials and troubles, persecutions and distresses; at last a Cross, and at the end the goal of glory, and the solace of the Saviour. Now came the fateful question: "Simon, . . . lovest thou Me more than these"—the old life, the fishing, the comfort, and the quiet?

Past failure stared him in the face. It was so recent and remorseful. Almost ashamed to answer, humbly he takes his stand behind his Master. "Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee." *Jesus saith unto him, "Feed My sheep."* So once for all he made his eternal choice. So he weighed life's short day of pleasure against an eternity of blessing, and rejoiced to set "the sufferings of this present time" against "the glory that shall be revealed." *Go thou and do likewise!*

# THE COMPULSION OF CHRIST'S MISSIONARY COMMAND

## II. THE KING'S COMMAND

*"From the glory and the gladness,*
*From His secret place,*
*From the rapture of His Presence,*
*From the radiance of His Face,*
*Christ, the Son of God hath* SENT *me*
*Through the midnight lands;*
*Mine the mighty ordination*
*Of the Pierced Hands."*

# THE COMPULSION OF CHRIST'S MISSIONARY COMMAND

## II. THE KING'S COMMAND

THE scene changes to the mountain top in Galilee. Here the Saviour had appointed a final meeting. He had shown them by the lake that their love for Him had spoiled them for the world, and had spoiled the world for them. He had shown them that henceforward there was no satisfaction for them but in His service. He had ordained them shepherds; now He would appoint them world witnesses, and define their field of labour.

It is in St. Matthew, where the Lord Jesus is set forth as the King of Jew and Gentile, of world and heart of men, that the Christian finds his clearest charter. There on the mountain top He met them. It needed to be a mountain, for it was a world vision they were to be shown; and mountains are God's vantage grounds for short-sighted, self-occupied disciples. The atmosphere of Palestine is noted for its clearness. Yet the atmosphere of His presence still further clarifies the sight, yielding us a prophet's vision, to behold things as they are in His sight who knoweth the end from the beginning.

Join then the cluster of figures round the ascending, departing Saviour, and hear His royal command. It is an old Call now, so old that though it is known to most, it is ignored by most. "All power is given unto Me," He said; "*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations: . . . and lo, I am with you alway.*" Here is the *missionary command*, and its *compensation.* This is the changeless commission; this is Christ's great standing order for His Army of Occupation. As He is changeless, so are His words, so are His orders. Passing our love for life should be our love for Christ. When He really becomes the Lord of our lives, every wish of His becomes a command, even as every command becomes an enabling.

So, as we practise His Presence, as we yearn for more of His Spirit, as we long to be conformed to His image, always there must ring in our minds His clarion call, His everlasting "*Go*"; Go where I am not known. The news, the good news, that has meant so much to you, will mean as much to others. "Go . . . therefore: . . . and lo, I am with you alway." Here is the most brilliant career open to the sons of men. Here lie the highest honours to be won. Yet, besides the certainties of the future, He has promised His messengers "manifold more in this present time"; indeed, "He giveth us richly all things to enjoy": for "Lo, I am with you alway."

Here is where parents are apt to err. Providing for the future, they pile up riches for posterity, when piling up prayers would do infinitely more for those they love. It is a custom with some fathers to insure the lives of their children, so that when they come of age they receive a dowry. Yet there is a life assur-

ance that is surer, safer, and far more beneficent than the doubtful gift of wealth. The premiums are within the reach of all. For the premiums are prayers. Such a policy yields from the very beginning a bonus richer than can be realised. And the coming of age of a life so freighted with prayer is fraught with untold blessed possibilities. Such a dowry you can ensure for your child.

Yet the attitude of many parents toward God's missionary command is passive rather than active. Should He call their children to His service, they would be resigned rather than rejoicing. Yet in this day of ripening crops, of whitening harvests, of mass movements toward the Cross, more is required. It is the highest privilege, it is the most solemn responsibility of parents to pray their children out into the foreign field; not merely to let them go when they are thrust out. Christ often waits for us to "pray," that He may "thrust." And often while we wait, and neglect to pray, those He might have "thrust forth" become side-tracked, and entangled, and largely lost to His service. Parents, you "do not well." This is "a day of good tidings," of open doors, of rich rewards in the Mission Field, and you hold back your prayers.

Seeing the onus of the surrendered soul is to show, not why he should go, but rather why he should not go, before he disobeys and stays at home; seeing that such a path is the simple path of obedience and blessing and glory—it is for you to so dower your child from birth with prayer, that God will choose, and thrust him out. So his coming of age may mean the coming of the King in fulness of blessing into his

heart; and the going of the servant in fulness of power into the Master's service.

Humbly I would add a personal testimony here. I know of those who have given five of their children to join the King's Foreign Legion. I know with what deep emotion and thankfulness each one of us in turn has been yielded up, to go forth to His glorious service in answer to lifelong prayers. Such a patrimony of prayer is a never-ending benediction. It is a most precious possession, the most to be desired in all the world. God grant you the joy of obtaining it for your children.

This, then, is the personal point of view. Yet there is a larger outlook, the Church's point of view, that is equally important. Even as no man liveth to himself, and no man shall be self-centred, but he shall suffer; even so it is and must be with a Church. Each must have an outlet, or stagnate. The whole spirit of the Saviour is opposed to self and selfishness. He lived and died, not for Himself, but for aliens and outcasts, for those that are afar off. So must the Church, or it will decay. He cannot bless, as He would like to, those whose eyes are fixed on themselves and their own little affairs. "Looking unto Jesus" is in itself the first requisite of blessing. It is such expectant eyes, turned away from self, and looking unto Him, that will behold the whitening fields. Then if our hearts are right, they will be in sympathy with His, and yearn for the Regions Beyond. For such is the mind of Christ.

Now the Mission Field has a definite and all-important function to perform towards the home Churches. Missions are to the Church what the

laboratory is to the lecture-room. In the lecture-room, learning is dispensed, truth is formulated, and theories are propounded. In the laboratory these conclusions and suppositions of the lecture-room are verified or disproved. *The Mission Field is the Church's laboratory of souls*, where the reaction of conversion is being constantly proved and demonstrated before our eyes, and where the certainties of faith are again and again being brought under our notice.

Yet coming back from the mission field, the greatest shock is to find how much God's Word has become disbelieved and dishonoured, and His power to save questioned. Conclusions are drawn which would be tragic if they were true. Why has this unbelief arisen? Mainly, it seems, because, as God describes it, the human heart is "deceitful above all things." Thus, though these Eternal Verities were proved and demonstrated by our fathers, and produced in them the intensest faith and devotion; yet because they are not being demonstrated to-day in the home lands as they used to be, men disbelieve in them.

Yet in heathen lands God has triumphs as great as ever. He still makes bare His mighty arm. He still works His wonders with power unabated. And through what does He work? Through learning, or education, or civilization? No, but through "the foolishness of preaching": through His Eternal Word, which is neither obsolete nor legendary, but is still, in the hands of faith, "the power of God unto salvation."

It is said, "a little child shall lead them": even so the infant Church of the Mission Field may become God's witness, in this era of emasculated churches, of dwindling congregations, of unconverted Church

members, that shall bring new life and faith to the home lands. None may come near a fire without being warmed; even so none may touch a mission where souls are being saved, and the heathen are pressing into the Kingdom of God, but his heart shall be stirred with a fresh devotion to his Master. Thus revival and revitalising power will come most surely via the foreign field.

It is the duty, the essential, of every Church to maintain a vital union with the Mission Field. Not merely to give a few shillings, and then to go on its way complacently, but to carry some of the burdens of the work and the workers, that it may join in their joy of bringing men to Christ. That is the most stirring thing in the spiritual life. At home, from the constant ploughing of the fields, the soil seems sterile. Conversions, the primary business of the Church, are few and far between, and take much winning. The workers at home seem more than anything like men turning over the tailings of a worked-out mine; while in the foreign field, where the reaping has begun, rich gold-bearing seams are being worked, with abundant returns and rejoicing.

For one of the greatest privileges of the firing line in the Mission Field is that of *watching God's Word at work in virgin soil*; of watching how it is still "sharper than any two-edged sword," and able to make a breach in heathen armour and indifference, where all human eloquence and influence would fail. Joining in such a work through prayer, having an intimate knowledge of the work and a vital union with the reapers, will bring a fresh breath of revival to cold hearts, to self-centred lives, to empty pews.

Rejoicing over multitudes of men repenting of their sins and yielding to the Saviour, will stir again into flame the waning fires of devotion and prayer. Thus will be repeated the experience of Acts xv. 3, when the returning messengers, "declaring the conversion of the Gentiles, . . . caused great joy unto all the brethren."

Without relaxing your efforts at home, which are so urgently needed, may God help you also to "turn to the Gentiles," that you may receive through them a fresh zeal and joy and fervour in the Master's service. And if it is still only sowing time in the Mission Field in which you have so far been interested, get in touch *as well* with a harvest field, in which God has already begun the reaping, that thus "sowers and reapers may rejoice together." *Above all, dwell much on the mountain top.* There prayer is wont to be made. There world visions are seen. There sympathies are broadened. For there the Saviour is met.

It was on "an exceeding high mountain" that He was offered the kingdoms of this world, at the impossible price of disobedience to His Father. It is fitting that from a mountain top He should look now to come into possession of these same kingdoms at the price of your obedience.

"And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him, *but some doubted.*" How significant of the human heart! It was His farewell. It was after "many infallible proofs." Yet some doubted! It is ever so. God help us to be among the worshippers and not among the doubters; that we may hear again the Saviour's faith-inspiring promise, and ever be obedient to the "heavenly vision."

"*Go*," He still says; "and *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*"

"*Here am I, Lord, send me.*"

"Some one shall go at the Master's word
Over the seas to the lands afar,
Telling to those who have never heard
What His wonderful mercies are.
Who shall haste to tell what *we* know so well?
*Shall you? Shall I?*

Some one shall gather the sheaves for Him,
Some one shall bind them with joyful hand,
Some one shall toil through the shadows dim,
For the *morn* in the Heavenly land.
Who shall bind the corn, for the golden morn?
*Shall you? Shall I?*"

SARAH G. STOCK.

# THE COMPULSION OF CHRIST'S MISSIONARY COMMAND

## III. THE ENDURING REWARD

*"I hear ten thousand voices singing*
*Their praises to the Lord on high;*
*Far distant shores and hills are ringing*
*With anthems of their nations' joy—*
*'Praise ye the Lord, for He has given*
*To lands in darkness hid, His light,*
*As morning rays light up the heaven,*
*His Word has chased away our night.'"*

Rev. H. W. Fox.

# THE COMPULSION OF CHRIST'S MISSIONARY COMMAND

## III. THE ENDURING REWARD

UPON the heated waters of the tropics, by sun-baked shores, and by islands swept by hurricanes and tides, a busy, restless fleet pursues its calling. It does not matter that the life is hard, the climate is unhealthy. They come from far and wide, the sweepings of the East, drawn by one magnet, hope of gain. So all day long they reap the ocean's harvest. They drift along in knots and groups, and every now and then a yellow or a brown skinned man slips overboard, and dropping to the bottom, fills his arms with treasures of the deep, and then emerges panting with his load. *He is a diver.*

If you or I should join him, I wonder what would take our fancy? What would we spend the precious working time in gathering? Would it be white and dazzling coral, the ocean's fairest flowers? or painted fishes, blue and violet and red? or shells all curious and gaily tinted? These are the things that first attract the eye. And if we brought them to the surface with labour and with toil, and heaped them on the deck, how fleeting is their beauty! A day or so, the colour fades, the beauty goes, the whole decays. The fire

tries them: they are only dross to jettison and cast away.

But watch the diver as he comes up wet and panting. His arms are filled with dull brown disks, that have no beauty, but are set with slime and seaweed. They seem so worthless; so unworthy of such toil and risk; so unattractive. It looks like that at first. *But wait!* The diver slips a knife between the edges of the disk, and there before you lies an opened gleaming pearl shell; and feeling round the edge he comes upon a *pearl*, a *silver pearl*! That is the reason of his risk. For this he gives his life, this diver after pearls. How well he is repaid!

Is this not true of life?—my life, your life? Are we not divers, seekers, toilers all?

What do we seek? The pleasant things of life, things that attract us and allure, that seemed desirable; fine clothes and houses, pleasures, luxuries, and lands, pictures and books? All beautiful, but with beauties that perish in the using; that cannot stand the fire; that leave us in the end, empty though multiplied with goods; "with hands so full of money, and hearts so full of care." *Is this the goal of life?*

Christ lived and died for none of these. He saw beyond, and in the sinful bodies of mankind, so soiled and unattractive, He saw immortal souls. These were to Him the pearls of greatest price. For such as these He died. And He would have us follow in His steps, and win these souls for Him.

Which shall it be? The pleasure of this world, things that attract, corals and graceful shells; pleasures and luxuries and lands? Or *silver pearls, the souls of men?*

"What is your life?" gravely question the searching words of the Apostle James. "*What is your life? it is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*" Steam, too, is a vapour. It may be dissipated, and dissolved into thin air. *But it may be harnessed to move the world.* Even so the passing vapour of your life may be dissipated and dispersed, to leave no enduring record, to win no reward. But it may be conserved and intensified and utilised by the Saviour to help in calling out His Bride, in filling up the ranks of the redeemed. He calls to all. *He calls to you.*

"Follow Me," He said to those simple homely men by the lake-side, "*Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.*" Such was the Master's mind. He changes not. His eye and His compassion reach to the uttermost of all the world. He sees the millions of the East and West, the black and brown and yellow men; formed in His image, made after His likeness. He sees them as they live and sin, and sinning die. For such as these *He* died, and long ago sent messengers to tell them of His love. The message was delayed, and only lately reached the great domain of darkness.

*Yet now the net breaks! The messengers are overwhelmed with work! "And they beckoned unto their partners that they should come and help them."*

*Will you not hear and come?*

*Behold, He cometh with clouds!*

*The article "Tarry or Sleep?" is reprinted from the* 1913 *Annual Report of the South Sea Evangelical Mission, a copy of which will be sent free to a limited number, upon application by post to the Hon. Sec. S.S.E. Mission, Wynward St., Sydney, Australia; or to Mrs. Gates, Crescent Rd., Brentwood, Essex, England. A copy of Dr. Deck's periodical letter from the islands, printed and illustrated, telling of the island life, and the triumphs of the Gospel in the Solomons, will be sent for one year, on receipt of address and* 1*s. in stamps, to cover postage.*

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